DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 313 908 FL 018 261

AUTHOR Kwofie, Emmanuel N.
TITLE The Acquisition and Use of French as a Second Language in Africa (Sociolinguistic, Historical-Comparative and Methodological Perspectives). Publication H-10.
INSTITUTION Laval Univ., Quebec (Quebec). International Center for Research on Bilingualism.
REPORT NO ISBN-2-89219-199-8
PUB DATE 89
NOTE 88p.
PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC04 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Children; Creoles; Diachronic Linguistics; Educational History; Foreign Countries; *French; *Interference (Language); *Language Research; *Language Variation; Official Languages; Pidgins; Research Methodology; Second Language Learning; Sociolinguistics; Uncommonly Taught Languages
IDENTIFIERS *Africa; *Language Contact

ABSTRACT

A collection of papers addresses three aspects of the learning and use of French as a second language in Africa. The first two chapters look at the sociolinguistic dimension; the first examines the language question and language consciousness in parts of Africa where French was once or is still used as an official or "second" language. The second deals with aspects of French language learning by children. Chapter 3 is concerned with the historical dimensions of French language learning and use. The perspective assumed is both historical and comparative, extending to pidginization and creolization as processes of linguistic evolution. Chapters 4 and 5 discuss methodological aspects of research on French outside of France. Chapter 4 describes French language contact in both North and West Africa. Chapter 5 examines the notions of linguistic interference, linguistic variety, and French language contact. (Author/MSE)

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Emmanuel N. KWOFIE

THE ACQUISITION AND USE OF FRENCH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE IN AFRICA

(Sociolinguistic, Historical - Comparative and Methodological Perspectives)

Publication H-10

1989
Centre international de recherche sur le bilinguisme
International Center for Research on Bilingualism
Québec

Le Centre international de recherche sur le bilinguisme est un organisme de recherche universitaire qui reçoit une contribution du Secrétariat d'État du Canada pour son programme de publication.

The International Center for Research on Bilingualism is a university research institution which receives a supporting grant from the Secretary of State of Canada for its publication programme.

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Dépôt légal (Québec) 1er trimestre 1989
ISBN 2-89219-199-8

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PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION

The chapters of this book are arranged under three main headings representing three of the numerous dimensions of the acquisition and use of French as a second language in Africa: the socio-linguistic, historical - comparative and methodological.

Some of the chapters of this book are based on essays written for linguistic conferences and symposia; in several cases, however, essays are yet to appear in conference proceedings or professional journals. An important justification for re-utilising such essays is to make my thoughts easily available to a wider public. To avoid re-duplication when and if conference proceedings and professional journals do finally appear, I have substantially modified the essays concerned by extending or restricting given perspectives. I have indicated at the beginning of the relevant chapters related essays and their sources.

Chapter 1 examines the language question and language consciousness in parts of Africa where French was once or is still used as an official or "second" language.

Chapter 2 deals with aspects of the acquisition of French by children.

Chapter 3 is concerned with the historical dimensions of French language acquisition and use. The perspective assumed here is not only historical but also comparative and extends to pidginisation and creolisation as processes of linguistic evolution.

Chapters 4 and 5 are devoted to a discussion of aspects of the study of French outside of France. The focus in these chapters is on methodology beginning with the appreciation of concrete contact situations in chapter 4 and passing on to the theoretical in chapter 5.

The author is grateful to all editors for permission to re-use or include, albeit in modified form, material that appears in their journals.

If there is anything valuable in the chapters of this book, the reader must credit it to the teaching, encouragement and example of my numerous teachers in various branches of linguistics, who are scattered over the world and among whom it is a special pleasure for me to name the following:

Rebecca R. POSNER
Robert B. LE PAGE
William F. MACKEY
Fred. W. HOUSEHOLDER
Pierre GUIRAUD

Finally, I wish to record here my sincere thanks to Mr. Emmanuel E. Edem, Secretary of the University of Lagos Centre for Cultural Studies, for efficiently preparing the typescript for this work and my gratitude to my wife, Grace, for her encouragement, patient listening to and frequent discussions of parts of the work.

Emmanuel N. KWOFIE

PREFACE TO THE NEW EDITION

Seven years have elapsed since this work was first published by Hoffmann-Verlag, Grossen-Linden, as volume 15 in the Giessener Beiträge zur Sprachwissenschaft series directed by Professor Jean Caudmon of the Institute of Romance Philology at Giessen University, West Germany.

Foreign Exchange restrictions in Nigeria regarding book importation, due largely to the unfavourable world-wide economic situation which has caused many an enterprise to fold up, made it impossible for the 1979 Hoffmann publication of this work to reach a wide enough public. With the discontinuance, albeit temporary, of the Giessen series consequent upon the un-announced closure some four years ago of the Hoffmann Press, it is now certain that the 1979 publication will remain undiffused, almost unknown outside Germany.

Encouraged by the comments of many of the readers of the rather few available complimentary copies of the book, I sought the permission of the Director of the Giessen series to reprint the work. I am sincerely grateful to Professor Caudmont for granting me permission to use copyright material.

It seems proper to note here that although aspects of chapter 5 (section 5.4) presented in French at a Learned Conference in France in 1976 have since 1979 been published in Conference Proceedings (1980), the present section in English offers a more extensive discussion. I have availed myself of the opportunity provided by this new edition to substantially modify the work. For example, not only have I translated all French quotations into English, a feature that the 1979 publication lacked; I have also extended my discussion of many of the issues raised in the various chapters, particularly chapters 1, 2, and 3. None of the five chapters of the book has in fact escaped revision either in substance or in style. I have however resisted the temptation to repeat in this edition views that I have either already expressed elsewhere (cf. E.N. Kwofie 1972, 1976, 1978 and 1985) or developed in book - length studies not yet published (E.N. Kwofie 1986a and 1986b).

I must thank my teachers once again for helping me to cultivate and sustain the particular constellation of interests imperfectly represented here by the three arbitrarily chosen dimensions of French language contact. I realised too late in 1979 that I had inadvertently omitted Professor Albert Valdman of Indiana University from the selective list of my teachers.

As is customary, however, I am alone responsible for the imperfections of this book.

Emmanuel N. KWOFIE

PART ONE

SOCIOLINGUISTIC ASPECTS

CHAPTER 1

THE USE OF FRENCH IN AFRICA: A FACTOR IN THE LANGUAGE QUESTION AND LANGUAGE CONSCIOUSNESS

1.1 Introduction: Language is related to other forms of human behaviour

Language has been viewed by scholars in various ways owing to the variety of needs that it serves; language interests not only the linguist, but also the philosopher, the psychologist, the sociologist and the writer: poet, novelist or literary critic. To the linguist of the Bloomfieldian tradition language is a sequence of stimuli and responses (cf. L. Bloomfield 1933: 22ff); to another it is "an arbitrary system of vocal symbols by means of which members of a social group cooperate and interact" (E.H. Sturtevant, 1947:2); to yet another adopting a more global view, "language is behavior, i.e. a phase of human activity which must not be treated in essence as structurally divorced from the structure of non-verbal human activity" (K.L. Pike 1954:2). To the social or cultural anthropologist language is a cultural phenomenon: Edward Sapir (1921:4) observes that language as "a purely historical heritage of the group, the product of long-continued social usage, is a non-instinctive acquired 'cultural' function".

In spite of the apparent variety of preoccupations, and preoccupations invariably determine scholars' conceptions of language, there is a remarkable degree of similarity or identity of such conceptions. The similarity would seem to be due principally to the fact that the different scholars are concerned with the *content of experience*, that is *meaning* or *signification*, even though the methods or modes of enquiry differ from discipline to dicipline.

F. Waismann (1965:6) for example has provided the following statement of what may appear to be major concerns of many disciplines, but particularly of philosophy. Notice by the way that philosophy is basic to all other disciplines, at least at the highest level of sophistication, or intellectual investigation:

> In daily life we are interested, for example, in the purpose of a particular action, but the philosopher examines the nature of purpose in general, the concept of purpose. The scientist looks for explanations of facts, but according to this view the meaning of explanation is itself a problem of the philosopher. The legal philosopher examines the essence of justice, the philosopher of languages the essence of language and so on. The most general concepts of science-space and time, chance and law, life and consciousness, meaning and purpose - can only be illuminated philosophically.

The question of orientation or *method of investigation* is undoubtedly an important determinant of the nature of any discipline and of the results likely to be achieved in that discipline. But it appears that disciplines depending on or related to language and linguistics are generally constrained to see their language related problems through the glasses offered them by "professional practitioners" of language and linguistics.

In his chapter on "Thinking in Primitive Communities", B.L. Whorf (1956:73) has made the illuminating statement that follows on the nature and role of language and linguistics and on the relationship of linguistics to anthropology and psychology for example (the underlining is mine):

> What needs to be clearly seen by anthropologists, who to a large extent have gotten the idea that linguistics is merely a highly specialized and tediously technical pigeon-hole in a far corner of the anthropological workshop, is that linguistics is essentially the quest of MEANING. (...) ... the simple fact is that its real concern is to light up the thick darkness of language, and thereby of much of the thought, the culture, and the outlook upon life of a given community, with the light of (...) this transmuting principle of meaning .... The investigator of culture should hold an ideal of linguistics as that of a heuristic approach to problems of psychology which hitherto may have shrunk from considering - a glass through which, when correctly focussed, will appear the TRUE SHAPES of many of those forces which hitherto have been to him but the inscrutable blank of invisible and bodiless thought.

There is as was remarked earlier a fair consensus of opinions among the diverse scholars that language serves for expressing the experience of the speaker including what has been described as "the inner world of his consciousness": this is what M.A.K. Halliday (1971) has termed the *ideational* function of language. In addition to this function, language serves for delimiting social groups; in other words, language has as one of its functions the expression of interpersonal relations, a view that is clearly implied in Sturtevant's definition cited above. These two functions of language: the *ideational* and *interpersonal* or *social* are aptly presented by L. Hjelmslev (1968:9-10) in the following form:

> Language is the instrument by means of which man fashions his thoughts, feelings, emotions, and actions, the instrument by means of which he influences and is influenced by others, the ultimate and deepest foundation of human society.

Since society and culture, defined as "the socially inherited assemblage of practices and beliefs that determines the texture of our lives" (E. Sapir 1921:207, 318), are indissolubly linked one to the other, language as a means of human communication becomes not only an important and powerful instrument of socialisation but also an indispensable medium for the transmission of culture. It may be observed here that although such aspects of culture as (certain types of) music, painting, and sculpture, often do not have any direct link with spoken language, they may nonetheless be powerfully represented or reflected by means of written language; there are also other aspects of culture that are hardly conceivable without language. There is in fact no part or feature of human life and experience that language cannot deal with, even if imperfectly in some cases (cf. R.H. Robins 1964:31). Indeed, the link between culture and language is so close that the general tendency has been either to regard language as providing access to the study of culture or else to identify culture with language. Recall here the famous Whorfian formulation of the interrelationship between thought, language and reality (see J.B. Carroll (ed) 1966:252); it is language that allows the identification and expression of cultural differences in so far as culture is what a society does and thinks:

> Actually, thinking is most mysterious, and by far the greatest light upon it that we have is thrown by the study of language. This study shows that the forms of a person's thoughts are controlled by inexplorable laws of pattern of which he is unconscious. These patterns are the unperceived intricate systematizations of his own language.

Considering a society's language as an aspect of its culture, Ward H. Goudenough (1964:36) has offered the following extended characterisation of culture:

> As I see it, a society's culture consists of whatever it is one has to know or believe in order to operate in a manner acceptable to its members, and do so in any role that they accept for any one of themselves. Culture, being what people have to learn as distinct from their biological heritage, must consist of the end product of learning: knowledge, in a most general, if relative sense of the term. By this definition, we should note that culture is not a material phenomenon; it does not consist of things, people, behavior, or emotions. It is rather an organization of these things. It is the forms of things that people have in mind, their models for perceiving, relating, and otherwise interpreting them. As such the things people say and do, their social arrangements and events, are products or by-products of their culture as they apply it to the task of perceiving and dealing with their circumstances.

Culture, according to Goudenough's formulation is equivalent to "knowledge", a "mode of organization"; it is intellectual or cognitive in the main and only secondarily material.

Examining the relationship of race and culture to language, E. Sapir (1921:217-8) also observes that:

> Language and our thought-grooves are inextricably interrelated, are, in a sense, one and the same. As there is nothing to show that there are significant differences in the fundamental conformation of thought, it follows that the infinite variability of linguistic form, another name for the infinite variability of the actual process of thought, cannot be an index of such significant racial differences (...) Culture may be defined as what a society does and thinks. Language is a particular how of thought.

The relationship between culture and language has in fact been so abundantly discussed and demonstrated in the literature that it has long become self-evident that language is an important part of the cultural heritage of a people. The superimposition of a language that is alien to any people to the possible detriment: neglect, abandonment or eventual disappearance of autochthonous or indigenous languages will naturally call forth various reactions from the people on whom such a language is imposed. The imposition, acquisition, maintenance and use of French in Africa are considered by many Africans to have posed and to still pose social, political, educational and linguistic problems. The aim of this chapter is to identify and discuss aspects of the social and psychological problems that arise from the acquisition and use of French in parts of francophone Africa. I shall leave out of discussion the purely linguistic aspect to which two studies have already been devoted (see E.N. Kwofie 1977b and 1978). The historico-political and educational aspects will be examined only in so far as they determine African language consciousness (For a discussion of other aspects of the political and educational problem see T.A. Sebeok (ed) 1971 passim, and P.F.A. Kotey & H. Der-Houssikian (eds) 1977:3-84).

1.2 The socio-political context of African language consciousness

What is described here as language consciousness is concern expressed by Africans about the future or fate of indigenous or African languages as a result of the increasing use of French, or the anxiety of Africans over the form or destiny of French, where such anxiety exists, or generally speaking the awareness of Africans of their language problems.

Until the 1960s, the era of political independences for most of francophone Africa, French had generally been the only language of national administration and formal education. The destiny of the French language, which is inevitably tied up with that of African and other languages in Africa,

would seem to differ from one geographical context to another since the evolution of any language depends on the dynamics of its geographical location. By dynamics is meant the political, social, economic and linguistic factors operative in a group, local or national.

French has been used or continues to be used in at least *fifteen* African countries since its first introduction into Africa over a century ago. It would seem difficult, if not impossible, in the present context, to isolate and describe *all the factors subsumed under "dynamics"* for each African group in which French is utilised. What is proposed here therefore is the examination of the broad outlines; and for this purpose, the convenient traditional geographical groupings of French North Africa, French West Africa and French Equatorial Africa are retained.

1.2.1 French North Africa

French North Africa comprises three countries, Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia; each country has marked individual characteristics.

Until it became independent in July 1962 after a decade or so of independence struggle, Algeria like Morocco and Tunisia, had been considered by France and Frenchmen as a prolongation of France; Algeria, declared French in 1848, became an integral part of France and remained effectively so for some 110 years. Quite unlike Algeria however Morocco and Tunisia were protectorates only for some 40 years and 75 years respectively, attaining their independence from France in 1956.

Writing in 1936 Franck L. Schoell had observed that the French language had the greatest possibilities of expansion in North Africa in the 19th and 20th centuries. Out of a total population of 14,700,000 people at the time some 1,280,000 were Europeans with nearly 1,024,000 being French (Algeria alone had a population of 14,770,000 in 1971). The events that took place in the 1950s culminating in the massive French exodus in the early 1960s could not of course have been foreseen by Schoell when he was writing. Those events were to affect the fortunes of the French language in North Africa profoundly. Although the total North African population had almost doubled by 1963 being estimated at 26 million and tripled by 1977 being estimated at 40,700,000, probably not more than 1½ million were French. An "ethnological mixed bag" from numerous invasions, occupations and migrations, North Africa was until 1962 inhabited by Arabs, Berbers, Portuguese, Spaniards, Italians, Blacks and Frenchmen among others. The exact ethnic composition of each of the three countries is not known; what is certain however is that Arabs predominated in all countries and that as far as language dominance is concerned, Arabic had a clear edge over all other languages represented in North Africa. It is inconceivable that the situation would have so drastically changed in fifteen years or so in favour of French. Out of nearly 12 million people in Morocco, as estimated in 1961, about 11¼ million were Arabs or muslim; 400,000 were foreigners, presumably largely French, Spanish, Italian and Portuguese while 180,000 were Jews. Morocco's population was estimated at 15,433,259 in 1971 with some 15,000,000 Arabs and fewer than 50,000 Berbers. And yet her European population which was estimated at 500,000 before independence had dropped to 160,000 by 1968 and to 112,000 by 1971. The 4 million inhabitants of Tunisia in 1963 comprised some 90,000 French, 52,000 Italians and 80,000 Jews; 46,000 were Tunisian subjects. The European population of Algeria, on the other hand, had fallen from 1 million in 1959 to 196,000 by 1969 with Arabs and Berbers constituting more than 90% of the population estimated at 14,700,000 in 1971 (cf. C. Legum (ed) 1965:43-60; 61-70; Jeune Afrique Éditions: *The Atlas of Africa* 1971).

If it seems fair to say that the French language could not but be the medium of government, while the French administered these North African countries it would be less insightful to suggest or grossly incorrect to attribute the same leading role to that language after independence in view of the numerical and political importance of the Arabic speaking population, the cultural value of the language and the linguistic feeling of the masses. *Arabic has now become official language while French and Spanish have come to assume a secondary status.* However, the question of abandoning

the French language completely does not seem to have arisen since independence some thirty years ago. Ben Bella, the first post-independence Algerian President for exemple had recommended the maintenance of French while re-affirming the need for arabicisation just a few years after independence.

> Nous n'abandonnerons pas la langue française... En abandonnant le français, nous savons ce que nous perdrions. Réellement nous n'en avons pas du tout l'envie... (cited by André Adam, 1966).
>
> (We will not abandon the French language... In abandoning French, we know what we would be losing. Really we do not al all wish to abandon French).

Ten years or so later, Ben Bella's successor, the late Houari Boumediene underscored the importance of Arabic by saying (see "Documents Algérie" in *Annuaire de l'Afrique du Nord* XV 1976:811):

> En ce qui concerne la langue nationale, il doit être clair que la souveraineté de la langue arabe est indiscutable. Elle ne doit pas avoir de concurrente. Je fais allusion ici à la langue française.
>
> (As regards the national language, it must be clear that the sovereignty of the Arabic language is undebatable. It must have no competitor. I am alluding here to the French language).

The ubiquity or the pervading influence of Arabic and consequently of Islam had been such that even before independence Muslim or Arabic schools had had to be set up on a scale that has as yet been unparalleled even in parts of West Africa where allegiance to Islam is perhaps equally strong. Although pure French schools, Franco-Muslim schools and free schools coexist in Morocco, for example, there have been continuous demands for complete arabicisation of large areas of the educational system as a means of reducing the funding of French teachers among other things (cf. A. Adam in *Annuaire de l'Afrique du Nord* VIII 1969:472-484). In Tunisia, on the other hand, Arabic had begun to be used exclusively for the first two years of primary school from 1958; but the Government decided in the late 1960s that the teaching of French should begin from the first year of primary school, to allow the study of science subjects which for obvious reasons are still taught in French. The Government drew the distinction between Arabicisation and foreign language teaching in the following way:

> Il ne faut pas confondre l'arabisation de l'enseignement avec la suppression de l'enseignement des langues étrangères dès les premières années des études primaires (cf. A. Adam in op. cit. 485).
>
> (We must not confuse the arabicisation of teaching with the stoppage of foreign language teaching in the first years of primary studies (= school)).

In spite of their originally comparable political situations - being all of them dependent upon France - Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia seem to be united more by Islam and hence by Arabic as a common language than by French. Although Islam is a potent influence throughout the African continent, it is practically the sole religion of all peoples of North Africa, from Egypt to Morocco (cf. Jeune Afrique Éditions, *The Atlas of Africa* 1973:19 and F.D. Fage 1969). Underlying its spread to other parts of Africa (from North Africa) is the belief that unlike the Christian religion, in the "cloak" of Catholicism (and protestantism) with French and other foreign, non-African languages as

"dagger", Islam with Arabic as its sceptre does not upset the social habits of the convert (cf. the A. Colot (1963) quotation cited in chapter 2, though a rather limited example). Islam was seen by the late Houari Boumediene not only as an important factor, the rallying point of Algerian nationalism but also as the directing influence of the socio-economic development of Algeria:

> L'Algérie est musulmane et elle le restera (...) L'Islam qui a été le bouclier pour la préservation et la sauvegarde de notre personnalité nationale, doit jouer le rôle de moteur dans le présent et l'avenir (see "Documents Algérie" op. cit. 1976:810).
>
> (Algeria is moslem and will remain so (...) Islam which has been the buckler for the preservation and security of our national character must play a leading role now and the future).

This formulation may apply just as well to Tunisia and Morocco and perhaps to other countries outside North Africa like Mauritania; but the case is generally different for French West and Equatorial Africa which will now be discussed together for convenience and owing to the near-identity of their political situations.

1.2.2 French West and Equatorial Africa

French policy in French North Africa and Madagascar had many similarities with that in French West and Equatorial Africa; there were however important differences in timing and content. These differences may be explained in numerous ways the most important of which is the fact that France acquired her colonies during the 19th century in a piecemeal fashion (with a possibly changing political philosophy) as a result of politico-economic rivalry with industrial nations. The French colonial effort really took off only after 1890 although France had been in North Africa around 1830 and earlier in West Africa. France had to carry her language, customs, flag and arms wherever she pleased if she wished to remain a great country influencing the destiny of Europe.

At the outbreak of the First World War, France already had seven colonies in West Africa; namely Senegal, Mauritania, Mali, Guinea, Ivory Coast, Niger and Dahomey (now the Republic of Benin). In Equatorial Africa, she had four colonies: Gabon, the Congo Republic, the Central African Republic and Chad. The federation of French Equatorial Africa was formed only in 1910 and occupation of that vast region was completed only after World War I, although initial contacts in the area date from 1839, that is just about a decade after the conquest of Algiers (cf. R.I. Rotberg 1965, C. Legum (ed) 1965 and R.W. July 1970).

Each of the seven French colonies of West Africa had its own budget and a governor who was responsible to a Governor-General resident at Dakar in Senegal; the Equatorial African colonies which were administered in a similar way had their Governor-General in Brazzaville.

Since the 1789 Revolution France had based her colonial policy on the idea of assimilation. This policy held that the African could assimilate French culture, identified with the French language; the African would be treated as socially equal to a Frenchman, if he accepted French culture. Hubert Deschamps who was administrator in Madagascar from 1926 to 1936, governor in Africa (Somaliland, Ivory Coast and Senegal from 1938) commented on the French colonial policy in Tropical Africa between the two World Wars in the following manner:

> Assimilation manifested itself in one area: everywhere and at every level, education was given exclusively in French. It was not only the convenience (for those in

> charge) which determined this choice, but especially the idea that by speaking French the natives would end by thinking in French and feeling French (cf. P. Gifford & Wm. R. Louis (eds) 1971:552).

Culturally, however, assimilation was possible only for a few Africans since very little financial provision for education led to the production of extremely small African elites:

> ...puisque nos moyens actuels ne nous permettent pas encore d'atteindre la masse et restreignent nos efforts à une minorité choisissons judicieusement cette minorité... choisissons nos élèves tout d'abord parmi les fils de chefs et de notables (Governor-General CARDE in Recueil des textes officiels relatifs à l'enseignement et au personnel de l'enseignement 1929:176-177).
>
> (...Since our present resources do not still allow us to reach the masses and restrict our efforts to a minority let us choose this minority judiciously... let us first choose among the sons of chiefs and important people).

Consequently, in French West Africa which had a total population of some 13 million inhabitants between 1919 and 1939 there were only 22,000 people in educational institutions with 20,000 at the primary level and less than 1,000 at the post-primary level. Madagascar with a population of 3,400,000 people had as many as 177,000 pupils in government and mission primary schools. The situation of French Equatorial Africa was comparable to that of French West Africa: out of a total population of some 2,800,000 inhabitants there were only 4,000 pupils in primary schools. Generally then, French West and Equatorial Africa had to depend on France to do jobs which in Madagascar were done by the Malagasy.

In the sphere of education, French was to be the exclusive medium of instruction (that is, there was no provision for the use of indigenous languages; a policy that was the exact opposite of the practice in the British and Belgian African colonies).

> Ce n'est point ici (wrote Governor-General Carde in 1924 (op. cit.), 1929:191) le lieu de discuter sur (sic) la possibilité ou les avantages de donner à l'indigène une culture intellectuelle en se servant de sa langue maternelle. Si le procédé peut être utilisé dans les pays à langue et à littérature nationales, il se heurte à de nombreuses difficultés chez les noirs de nos possessions où les dialectes très nombreux sont souvent sans analogie. La langue française est la seule qui doive nous occuper et que nous ayons à propager (...) La langue française sert donc de base à notre enseignement. C'est en français que nous devons faire toutes nos leçons.
>
> (This is not the place to discuss the possibility or advantages of giving the indigene an intellectual culture by using his mother tongue. If the procedure can be followed in countries with a national language and literature, it comes up against numerous difficulties (for the blacks) in our possessions where the very many dialects are often unrelated. The French language is the only language that we must propagate (...). The French language therefore forms the basis of our teaching. It is in French that we must teach all our lessons).

Politically, assimilation meant the centralisation of French rule from Paris, the use of French as the language of administration and the prohibition of the use of African languages in national life. The following pronouncements by Governor-General Carde in 1924 (*op. cit.* 1929:191) are quite clear on the matter:

> Notre politique d'association l'appelle (i.e. the African of the French possessions) de plus en plus à siéger dans nos conseils et nos assemblées à la condition qu'il sache parler français.
> Nos lois et règlements sont publiés en français. C'est en français que les jugements des tribunaux sont rendus. L'indigène n'est admis à présenter ses requêtes qu'en français.
>
> (Our policy of association invites him more and more to sit in our councils and assemblies on the condition that he can speak French.
> Our laws and regulations are published in French. It is in French that the courts pronounce judgements. The indigenes is allowed to present his requests only in French).

The policy of association, referred to by Carde, was however a shift from the policy of assimilation and was intended to accommodate the reality of the diversity of France's African possessions. The time had come when the nature or form of colonial institutions had to be determined by the evolution of Africans in a new African world, in a changing Africa. In the face of growing African reaction to European influence in Africa the survival of the French colonial empire demanded accommodation and co-operation rather than conflict with Africans.

The policy of assimilation and later of association seems to have profoundly and differently influenced the course of political development in French West and Equatorial Africa in comparison with the experience of the British-administered colonies of Africa. While the British colonies of Africa were concerned with agitating for political independence, the French African possessions focused their attention on winning cultural independence; this explains the birth of the *Negritude* movement spear-headed by Leopold Sedar Senghor and Aimé Cesaire in the 1930s, and widely accepted and promoted by several Francophone Africans.

The vaunted "retour aux sources" (return to the roots), implying the rediscovery, reappraisal and reaffirmation by Africans or Blacks generally of their history and culture must therefore be considered as a consequence of the use of French to the exclusion of African languages. Cultural consciousness was deemed to be a precondition for the success of the political awakening of francophone African countries. And yet the search for cultural identity in the African past could not alone have secured decolonisation for French West and Equatorial Africa; French-speaking Africa south of the Sahara required an example not only of nationalist struggle for but also of the possibility of independence from France, and that was provided by Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia. Four years after Tunisia's and Morocco's independence, the various French colonies in West and Equatorial Africa achieved their independence within the organisation of regional parties and in the wake of riots in parts of the Empire. The decolonisation effort in French West and Equatorial Africa differed however from that in French North Africa in the sense that while it was relatively peaceful in the former it was turbulent in the latter especially in Algeria. This difference is held by Charles Debbasch (in *Annuaire de l'Afrique du Nord* IV 1965:9-10) to underlie the degree of cohesion of the various colonies forming the different groupings:

> La décolonisation conduit un peuple à oublier ses contradictions et ses divergences. Elle produit généralement un phénomène de regroupement des partis. Plus la décolonisation a été dure et longue - c'est le cas de l'Afrique du Nord - plus l'unité s'est affirmée. Plus la décolonisation s'est déroulée de manière pacifique et rapide - c'est le cas de l'Afrique Noire - moins les tendances au regroupement ont eu l'occasion de s'épanouir.
>
> (Decolonization leads a people to forget its contradictions and its differences. It generally produces a phenomenon of regrouping of political parties. The more diffi-

cult and protracted the decolonisation process is - as was the case of North Africa- the greater is the unity; the more peaceful and rapid the process - as in the case of Black Africa - less widespread is the tendency towards regrouping).

With the attainment of independence from France by the African colonies of French West and Equatorial Africa and even by French North Africa the most enduring legacy of the French colonial effort is the French language. French is still the language of government and administration, education and literature in French West and Equatorial Africa. In North Africa, French is still widely used in some of these spheres notably in education and literature. Since French remains in comparison with African languages and Arabic by far the most extensively distributed or most important means of international communication, this means that French-speaking Africans must present their culture, history and themselves to the outside world in French. But what have been or are African reactions or attitudes to the use of French?

1.3 The expression of language consciousness: some reactions to the use of French

A language, as was observed earlier, is an integral part of the cultural heritage of the people who speak it as a first language or mother tongue. It may be the sole medium of a religion; as such it serves as an important element of unity among the faithful who may belong to the same country, speech community, or different countries and speech communities. This is largely the case of Arabic in North Africa. In other words, language may help to foster and promote nationalism, "cultural identity", regional or more specifically religious consciousness. It must be remarked however that the relationship between language and religion is not always a simple or direct one. Christianity for example has had more than a language as a medium; it has found expression in English, French, Portuguese, Italian among other languages, This is to say that the relationship between language and religion is arbitrary. In Africa, the "colonial" languages tend to be identified as media of foreign religions because the introduction of these languages was analogous with that of the various christian religions, particularly Catholicism and protestantism in their primeval form.

The French language has undoubtedly played a unifying role in multilingual francophone Africa both at the national and international levels; it may be observed that after the independence of the various French colonies and the eventual fragmentation of the former French empire it was the strong tradition of French culture, the possession of French as a common language that helped to maintain former French Africa as a cultural reality. French has indeed been one of the strong psychological factors in the creation of regional or continental organisations like the Organisation Commune de l'Afrique et du Madagascar (OCAM). However, if French as a colonial language helped to foster national political consciousness in pre-independence Africa, it is partly because there was no single African language to fill that function even though African languages were used in political campaigns at the local level; it is also partly but more importantly because political independence was considered during the colonial era to be a more pressing need than cultural independence. After the attainment of political independence however the importance of French in maintaining national consciousness seems to be regarded as secondary. The emphasis has come to be placed on cultural revivalism or independence which consists in the development and promotion of African languages among other things.

Concern for or interest in the promotion of African languages is widespread and has been expressed by individuals and governments at various times. At the individual level, the concern would seem to be, by and large, identifiable as language loyalty - the attachment each man feels for the first language in which he received his initial semiotic training. At the national, government level, concern for the promotion of African languages is no more than a reflection or polarisation of the reactions of individual citizens. Since African countries are generally multilingual it seems impossible

for most governments to encourage the development or promotion of all the languages spoken within the borders of their countries owing to the enormous diversity of languages and the attendant political, financial and educational problems.

To prevent local particularism or ethnicity governments in French-speaking Africa have generally retained French as the medium of education and national life after independence. Only few countries like Rwanda, Mauritania, Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia can boast of an official national language different from French. However, most governments have now embarked upon a programme intended to lead to the development and "natural selection" in the future of an African national language. Although the "failure", limited diffusion or expansion of French in African countries, despite the privileged status accorded it for decades, may be an important factor in increasing African language consciousness there are other more important factors. Efforts to develop African national languages are aimed at; i) stemming any form of cultural alienation that may attend upon the economic and social development of African states and Africans and ii) preserving or safeguarding authentic African cultural values.

It is for these reasons that the Agency for Cultural and Technical Co-operation made the following recommendations for the promotion of national languages at its December 1976 Yaounde Conference. The recommendations, significantly, were intended for the consideration of and implementation by the Organisation of African Unity and Member States (cf. *Liaison* N° 31, février 1977:5-6. The entire issue entitled *Les langues nationales* provides a wealth of information about several African countries including the Caribbean Republic of Haiti). The meeting on "Promotion of National Languages" being:

- Conscious of the fact that national languages are vectors of the historical and cultural heritage of our countries;
- Anxious to ensure that national languages occupy their rightful place in the cultural and socio-economic policy of our countries; (and)
- Convinced of the urgent need for schooling and mass education in national languages;

recommended that member states:

(a) set up, where it does not exist, a national institution which will enable States to choose a national language or languages for the purposes of schooling and adult education;
(b) gradually use national languages in teaching;
(c) encourage the study and description of national languages in specialised institutions;
(d) break down all hesitation and complexes of the masses vis-a-vis national languages through extensive information campaigns; sensitise and mobilise the masses within the framework of a policy to "change mental attitudes";
(e) encourage the training of linguists and specialists of African languages with a view to teaching national languages.

The meeting recommended, in the interest of all Africa, that the O.A.U. set up the relevant machinery within the context of its cultural charter for the promotion of African languages in a continental institution. This last recommendation was made on the assumption that African languages can significantly contribute to promote the unity of the African continent.

Earlier in 1976, the Conference of African Ministers of Education which met in Lagos had hoped that there would be "une véritable réconciliation de l'Africain avec son milieu" (a real reconciliation of the African with his environment). This reintegration could be achieved through "the social diffusion of culture and knowledge at the same time as the intellectual emancipation of the masses"; the diffusion of knowledge and culture among the masses would however seem to be possible only through the use of African languages in view of the high rate of illiteracy in the foreign languages (cf. chapter 2).

The advocacy and use of African languages in teaching at the primary levels of education particularly in Francophone Africa since independence are not felt to be incompatible or at variance with the recognition of the primary role of colonial languages in education; in fact, African languages are generally not expected, at least for the present to supersede the international languages outside Africa; their role would seem to be restricted: to help to express the African personality.

In consequence, it may be said that with the attainment of political independence the attitudes of francophone (and other) African countries towards French (European languages generally) became rather varied and especially with the increasing desire for Pan-Africanism which culminated in the founding of the Organization of African Unity (O.A.U.) about 1963: there are now those attitudes that recommend the total rejection of French or its replacement by African languages and those that suggest that the coexistence of French and African languages is necessary, but that African languages should be assigned a greater role in national life (see E.N. Kwofie 1972 for example).

If the idea of African national languages has gained currency, it is undoubtedly based on the general desire to preserve and safeguard "authentic" African cultural values, to prevent or at least minimise the cultural alienation that is seen to attend upon the mastery of a foreign language, and to ensure the "intellectual emancipation of the masses" which is presumably born of ignorance, or illiteracy.

It must be pointed out here however that if French education or culture diffused through the French language is now seen to have had adverse consequences on the African and must be "counteracted", it is largely because it had remained for far too long rather restricted, elitist. We have seen that limited financial resources were a major factor in the limited spread or expansion of education in Francophone Africa. However that may be, reactions against French would conceivably have been far different from what they are today, if the bulk of the population of each so called French-speaking African country had *in practice* or *in effect* been French-speaking. It is highly improbable that a whole country or a people would allow itself to be dispossessed of its cultures: intellectual and material, or feel the need for reintegration into an environment that was once its own, but which, "judged unsuitable" and voluntarily abandoned, has for long been lost. The feeling of difference between the masses, the educationally less privileged, and the French-educated minority, the elite, a feeling that tends to be exacerbated sometimes for political reasons, would probably not exist at all, because the "educational difference" would not have been allowed or nurtured in the first place.

Every people has a right to decide its destiny: the borrowing of alien cultures or traits of culture, the imposition of foreign values, the acceptance and eventual abandonment or rejection of such values are all necessary ingredients of change and development in a world of "give and take". Acculturation properly conceived, accepted and implemented by the "conscience" of a people, need not impoverish the people through the displacement or loss of "native cultures" or "cherished values"; it should rather enrich the people through the conscious selection and assimilation of those elements that are new but are seen to be useful. If educated Africans, who are the "conscience" of their peoples now believe that African societies have sufficiently borrowed from others and must reappraise their situation and values, there must be ample justification for such a reaction.

In his introduction to B.L. Whorf's *Language. Thought and Reality* Edward Sapir (1966:134) made the following pertinent remarks:

> Human beings do not live in the objective world alone nor alone in the world of social activity as ordinarily understood, but are very much at the mercy of the particular language which has become the medium of expression for their society. It is quite an illusion to imagine that one adjusts to reality essentially without the use of language and that language is merely an incidental means of solving specific problems of communication or reflection. The fact of the matter is that the 'real world' is to a large extent unconsciously built up on the language habits of the group ... We see and hear and otherwise experience very largely as we do because the language habits of our community predispose certain choices of interpretation.

The coexistence of French and African languages therefore necessarily implies the possibility not only of alternative choices of interpretation of experience, of perception and reaction but also of conflict of values.

In an essay in which they review the advantages and disadvantages of using European languages in education in Africa, Eyamba Bokamba and Josiah Tlou (1977:49) for example conclude as follows:

> While we recognize the difficulties inherent in the task of language planning, and especially in replacing the present official European languages in education, we do not believe these difficulties to be any more unsurmountable than the African struggle for political freedom in the 1960's. We strongly feel that the national language issue deserves the same degree of commitment if Africa is to liberate itself from cultural imperialism and shape its destiny.

As was remarked earlier, reactions to the use of French are varied; some are personal or individual and often contradictory; even where they are governmental and prescribe a national language other than French, the question has not been to abandon the use of French, but to restrict it wherever possible. Here are some reactions of individuals and governments.

The first set of reactions reported as a summary of reflections by Algerians on Algerian culture (see A. Adam, *op. cit.* culled from an Algerian daily, *El-Moudjahid*) may apply just as well to all francophone African countries with relevant modifications here and there:

> 1) La culture ne sera plus l'apanage de quelques privilégiés, elle doit être populaire.
> 2) L'arabisation est une nécessité, mais le bilinguisme n'est pas un mal.
> 3) Art et littérature doivent être de leur temps, donc parler de l'édification du socialisme qui est le plus grand événement de notre temps.
> 4) Liberté pour l'artiste ne doit pas signifier anarchie ou idées rétrogrades.
> 5) La langue et la culture françaises ont "aliéné" certains d'entre nous et les ont rendus "étrangers" à eux-mêmes, ce qui est tout à fait explicable. Mais nul ne saurait contester que l'ensemble des Algériens et des Algériennes sont restés profondément attachés à la langue et à la culture arabo-islamique et cela malgré tous les efforts de dépersonnalisation entrepris par l'occupant.
>
> 1) (Culture must not be the prerogative of a few privileged people; it must be for the masses.
> 2) Arabicisation is necessary, but bilingualism is not an evil.
> 3) Art and literature must be relevant to their time, they must therefore speak of the setting up of socialism which is the greatest event of our time.

4) Freedom for the artist does not mean anarchy or retrogressive ideas.
5) The French language and culture have alienated some of us and made them "strangers" to themselves; this can be (completely) explained away. But none will argue that the totality of Algerians, men and women, have remained deeply attached to the Arabic-Islamic language and culture and that, in spite of all the efforts at depersonalization made by the occupier).

In a speech delivered at Ottawa, Canada in May 1968, the Tunisian President, Habib Bourguiba, who is credited with the paternity of the idea of francophony, but which he graciously shares with Leopold Sedar Senghor, has also made the following remarks. As the Head of a government his views may be considered as representing the official Tunisian stand (see R. Fenaux *Discours sur la fonction internationale de la langue française*, no date, pp. 91-92):

Le français n'est pas, pour nous Tunisiens, une langue maternelle. C'est une langue d'usage. Le fait colonial nous a amenés en contact avec elle: nous l'avons adoptée comme un instrument de contact avec l'extérieur, de contestation et d'affirmation. Tout au long de notre lutte pour l'indépendance, nous l'avons utilisée pour faire entendre notre voix dans le concert des nations. Depuis l'indépendance, nous avons trouvé dans le bilinguisme un moyen efficace de préserver notre identité nationale, tout en participant à la recherche et au progrès par l'assimilation directe des techniques du monde d'aujourd'hui.
La Tunisie ne renie rien de son passé dont la langue arabe est l'expression. Mais elle sait bien que c'est grâce à la maîtrise d'une langue comme le français qu'elle peut aisément se faire entendre à l'extérieur, participer pleinement à la culture et à la vie du monde moderne.
Ayant fait ce choix du bilinguisme, non seulement linguistique mais culturel, nous nous sommes aperçus que l'usage d'une même langue est générateur d'une mentalité commune à tous ceux qui la parlent. C'est de cette communauté d'esprit que peut procéder ce qu'on a appellé la francophonie. C'est parce qu'elle met en contact privilégié les pays où le français est langue officielle et ceux où il est langue de travail ou d'usage, c'est parce que ces pays - ou provinces - se reconnaissent des aspirations, des perspectives et des besoins communs, que la francophonie est à mes yeux, ou peut devenir, un instrument de rapprochement.

(French is not a mother tongue for us Tunisians. It is our every day language. The colonial factor brought us into contact with it: we have adopted it as an instrument of contact with the outside world, of contestation and affirmation. Throughout our struggle for independence we used it to make our voices heard in the community of nations.
Since independence we have found in bilingualism an effective means of preserving our national identity, by taking part in research and progress through the direct assimilation of the techniques of the modern world. Tunisia does not deny any aspect of her past the expression of which is the Arabic language. But she knows that it is through the mastery of a language like French that she can easily make herself heard outside and fully participate in the culture and life of the modern world.
Having made this choice of bilingualism which is not only linguistic but also cultural, we have realised that the use of one and the same language generates a common mentality in those who speak it. It is from this corporate feeling that what has been called francophony can arise. It is because it brings into privileged contact those countries where French is official language, and those where it is working language or language of every day use; it is because those countries - or provinces - recognize they have common aspirations, perspectives and needs, that I see francophony as an instrument of rapprochement or as capable of becoming one.)

Governments may indeed legislate on the use of languages in the educational system and in national life and therefore determine or regulate to an extent what languages the individual may learn. However, since language learning or acquisition is possible outside the educational system and is also determined by social and psychological factors which are not always controlled by governments, at least not always successfully, the individual is likely to make linguistic choices that could be at variance with government decision. If French were therefore to be removed from educational systems, individuals in Africa would still learn it for one reason or another. The following individual opinions are suggestive, illustrative or instructive.

Mourad Bourboune, an Algerian writer, for example, considers the French language as the property of anyone who can use it; language is for him something universal that can be made to express values peculiar to the user:

> Nous avons cette chance de manier la langue française qui est notre langue de communication, de transmission de tous les jours mais qui exprime des valeurs qui sont fondamentalement les nôtres (...) Ce problème n'a jamais existé. Je m'exprime dans une langue que je maîtrise pour atteindre l'universel. Cette fameuse question de la langue est le pont-aux-ânes de la littérature maghrébine. Je suis un écrivain arabe qui s'exprime en français. Qu'y a-t-il d'insolite? Toute oeuvre est traduisible. La littérature maghrébine d'expression française est partie intégrante de la littérature arabe (J. Déjeux, 1973:378, 379).
>
> (We have this opportunity to handle the French language which is our language of communication and daily transmission but which expresses values that are basically ours. This problem has never existed. I express myself in a language that I master in order to attain the universal. This famous question of language is the platform of Maghrebian literature. I am an Arab writer who expresses himself in French. What is unusual in that? Every work is translatable. Maghrebian literature in French is an integral part of Arab literature).

In an article signed A.M. in *Révolution Africaine* (6 March 1965) another North African agreed with Bourboune that any one capable of doing so could use the French language and still express his inner consciousness even though he may, to an extent, have been "depersonalised" by colonialism and its legacy the French language at the end of his mastery.

> Nous écrivons le français, soit c'est la faute au colonialisme, êtes-vous au courant? Cela s'appelle la dépersonnalisation, mais, comme on ne tue pas un peuple et encore moins son âme, à travers ce véhicule, légué par le colonialisme, la langue française, nous exprimons l'Algérie.
> (quoted by A. Adam in Annuaire de l'Afrique du Nord, IV, 1965:224).
>
> (We write French; well, it is the fault of colonialism, are you aware of that? That is called depersonalisation, but as one cannot kill a people and much less its soul, we express Algeria through French, this vehicle bequeathed by colonialism).

While arabicisation, implying either the exclusive use or the predominant use of Arabic in most spheres of human endeavour in North Africa is considered "a psychological, social, political and economic necessity" by some, others feel that the co-existence of French and Arabic has its advantages, and have even consciously opted for French. This is the case of Kateb Yacine, another Algerian writer who furthermore regards French as an arm, a weapon:

> **Mon père est de culture arabe, ma mère aussi. J'ai eu à choisir et j'ai choisi la langue française. Pourquoi? Parce que, lorsqu'on m'apprenait l'arabe je m'endormais et lorsqu'on m'apprenait le français, j'étais parmi les deux ou trois premiers élèves algériens. Je savais bien que les Français me haissaient, je savais bien que je n'étais pas à ma place, mais j'étais sûr de conquérir une arme... - En Algérie, nous avons deux cultures qui sont non seulement en coexistence, mais en conflit constant et qui créent quelque chose.**
> (cited by A. Adam, op. cit. 224-225).
>
> (My father is of Arab culture, my mother too, I have had to choose and I chose the French language. Why? Because when I was being taught Arabic I slept off and when I was being taught French I was among the first two or three Algerian pupils. I was well aware that the French hated me, I knew very well that I was not in my place, but I was sure of acquiring a weapon ... - In Algeria, we have two cultures which are not only coexistent but in constant conflict and which produce something).

The idea of the French language being a weapon, an arm, recurs in the work of Léopold Sédar Senghor. Indeed, Senghor has always considered French as a language of "graciousness and civility", "a language of the gods", "a mighty organ capable of all the tones".

Whatever the attributes of the French language, the advantages and disadvantages of its use in Africa, may be for individual and governments, it seems that the language, reinforced by education, will continue to be used for as long as African languages tend to imply ethnicity, and African governments cannot as a result promote any of them to the status of national languages without putting their heads in the nests of hornets.

1.4 Conclusion: The inevitable French-African language complementarity

Commitment to the French language in French speaking Africa had been deep until the attainment of independence in the 1960s. That this should have been so is not surprising: there was in none of the French African colonies a single popular lingua franca which could have been considered a viable alternative for economic, political, administrative, educational and social purposes.

Although in the opinion of many Africans a profound knowledge or complete mastery of French is often accompanied by adverse psychological effects: psychological ambivalence, estrangement or cultural alienation, the French language has been and remains not only the indispensable weapon for the Francophone African's struggle for cultural recognition by the outside world, if that has not been already won, but also the only effective means of contact, the instrument of rapprochement in the modern world.

The French language has by the force of history become a "cultural function"; if during the colonial era it was a factor in the political consciousness or awakening of many African countries, it remains today not only the unbroken and seemingly unbreakable umbilical cord that links many a francophone African country to its adopted cultural mother, but also the link between all French-using countries desirous of maintaining old ties of brotherhood, solidarity and friendship and of fostering new ones. The future of the French language in the face of African cultural revivalism may be a matter for conjecture. But it remains true that the sustenance and further heightening of African language consciousness as it relates to the use of French will depend on the "genius of the French language", on global economic, political and cultural developments as well as on the desire of individual countries to survive in a competitive, fast-changing technology-oriented world.

The individual's destiny as shaped or influenced by the French language will in the final analysis depend on the degree of his mastery of and commitment to the language and the attitude of the government of his country to the language in the educational system and in national life.

CHAPTER 2

THE ACQUISITION OF FRENCH BY AFRICAN CHILDREN*

2.1 Introduction: The African linguistic setting and language acquisition

The work of linguists like S.W. Koelle (1854), D. Westermann & M.A. Bryan (1952), A. Meillet & M. Cohen (1952), J.H. Greenberg (1963), M. Guthrie & N. Tucker (1956), C.F. & F.M. Voegelin (1964) and W.E. Welmers (1963, 1973) has now clearly established the fact that Africa is a highly multilingual continent. Although estimates of the total number of languages vary from 800 to 1,140 and the territorial distribution or localisation of such languages is not always clearcut, it is undoubtedly true to say that every African country has no fewer than *five* languages.

A geographical region like West Africa, which comprises fifteen countries, possesses more than 550 languages. This gives an average of some 36 languages per country. While some of these countries have fewer than 30 languages others have over 100. Thus for example Nigeria is believed to possess as many as 400 languages, Ghana between 47 and 62 languages whereas Sierra Leone has fewer than 20 languages. Conservative subregional estimates for West Africa are as follows: *anglophone West Africa* comprising the Gambia, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Ghana, Nigeria and officially bilingual Cameroon (which tends to be excluded from West Africa) 450; *francophone West Africa* comprising Mauritania, Senegal, Guinea, Mali, Upper Volta now Burkina Faso, Niger, Ivory Coast, Benin, Togo and Cameroon: 130.

Some of the 550 or so languages operate to some extent as linguae francae; Hausa, Wolof, Mende and Temne, Susu, Yoruba, Ga, Akan, and Ewe are among such languages; Swahili in East Africa, Sango in Central Africa, and Arabic in North Africa seem to enjoy a position of pre-eminence in their respective areas than would seem to be the case for many of the West African linguae francae.

Superimposed upon this indigenous African "linguistic mosaic" are languages like English, French, Portuguese, which are ostensibly non-native to any West African speech community but which have great chances of becoming *first* languages for an ever-increasing number of African children, since educated African parents consider it advantageous for their children to acquire such non-autochthonous languages first before they learn their African *mother tongues*.

Two factors are generally considered to determine children's acquisition of non-African languages in Africa: these are educational and socio-economic. However, there is another potent but least investigated factor in the acquisition of non-African languages as well as African languages which are not mother tongues as *first* languages; this is the *inter-ethnic* factor. Some of the results of sociolinguistic research in West Africa over the last decade or so (cf. here F. Wioland 1966 and E.N. Kwofie 1968) for example not only suggest that parents tend to be identified with particular languages utilised in given multilingual settings but also show that in linguistically mixed homes children

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*This chapter is based on "Some Remarks on Second Language Acquisition by African Children" presented at The First International Congress for the Study of Child Language. Tokyo August 1978. The present essay is a shorter version of the original paper which also focused on the acquisition of aspects of English phonology by two of my children; Dorothy and Emmanuel then aged about 6 years and 4 years respectively.

may grow up speaking as their first language a language which is not the mother tongue of any of the parents. The situation whereby a non-African language may be acquired by children as a first language seems however to be restricted to educated families; it is inconceivable in uneducated settings.

Consequently, the following types of language situations may be proposed from the point of view of language acquisition by African children in the home and outside the home. All language learning takes place in social settings involving both children and adults; child-adult interaction is therefore an important variable in language acquisition.

(1) 2 African languages, with one being a lingua franca.
(2) 3 African languages, with one being a lingua franca.
(3) 2 African languages, with none being a lingua franca + an African lingua franca + a non-African lingua franca: English or French or both may be lingua francas in specific settings and may be used in the standard or substandard form by parents in the home or by peers at school.

These are by no means all the settings possible; there could be in given mixed marriages as many as 8 African languages in addition to English and/or French where each parent may know *four* African languages in addition to English and French; there may of course be other variations of the settings. Thus for example settings (1) and (2) may be modified only by the use of English or French as the only non-African lingua franca in the home. The different mother tongues of both parents may also be lingua francas. All these settings are theoretically possible and are relevant to studies of language acquisition in Africa.

Studies of first language acquisition by African children are rare in the literature; this is either because the 'universal principle' in language acquisition by children makes such specific studies unnecessary or because in comparison with diachronic and synchronic descriptions of African and European languages in Africa such studies are considered to be less important or uninteresting. By virtue of its wealth in languages and types of language contact, Africa offers immense opportunities however for testing many of the hypotheses advanced by scholars whether in the field of sociolinguistics, psycholinguistics or general linguistics. In contrast to first language acquisition studies, studies on second language learning in Africa have gained currency.

The present chapter does not present any systematic or detailed study of second language acquisition or learning by African children in any one area of phonology, grammar or lexis - an endeavour which could provide a basis for comparative studies on African children and children of other continents in specific domains. My preoccupation here is twofold: the first is to examine aspects of the linguistic situation in parts of Africa as they affect the learning of French; the second is to reflect on aspects of some language acquisition theories from the point of view of how they relate to French language learning and the characteristics of the French used by African children.

My subjects who are all Ivorian are aged between 7 years and 14 years; their profiles are presented in Table 1 as a complement to the generalised profile of the Ivory Coast population with ages ranging from 15 years to 45 years and above (see Tables 2A & B). Recourse to data on Senegal (Tables 3 and 4) is intended to show the important similarities that exist between some, if not all, francophone African countries and also to provide a basis and justification for some of my generalisations.

TABLE 1:

IVORY COAST

A SAMPLE LINGUISTIC PROFILE OF AFRICAN CHILDREN

	AGE AT TIME OF INVESTIGATION	SEX	ETHNIC GROUP	EUROPEAN LANGUAGE(S) SPOKEN	LANGUAGE KNOWN & FREQUENTLY OR INFREQUENTLY USED AT HOME	LENGTH OF USE OF EUROPEAN LANGUAGE(S)
Elizabeth	14 years	Female	Baule	French	Baule & French	6 years
Jacqueline	12 years	Female	Baule	French	Baule, Diula Agni & French	6 years
N'Zoa	13 years	Female	Agni	French	Agni, Baule & French	6 years
Catherine	11 years	Female	Agni	French	Agni & French	6 years
Pascal	11 years	Male	Agni	French	Agni & French	6 years
Louis	12 years	Male	Appolo	French	Appolo & French	6 years
Jean	14 years	Male	Appolo	French	French & Appolo	6 years at least
Amenan	13 years	Female	Baule	French	Diula, Baule & French	6 years
Assale	11 years	Male	Agni	French	French, Agni	6 years
Christian	9 years	Male	Agni	French	Agni	3 years at least
Leon	7 years	Male	Mixed: Appolo & Abure	French	French	3 years at least
Severin	14 years	Male	Baule	French	Diula, French Baule & Agni	7 years

2.2 Foreign language acquisition in Africa: Some sociolinguistic inferences from the Ivory Coast and Senegal

The above table which may be considered, within limits, as a sample of the varied linguistic backgrounds of African children is an empirical validation of the commonly held view, expressed above and also in numerous places (cf. for example P. Ladefoged et al 1972, E.N. Kwofie 1977) that English and French are not natively spoken by most African children. It will be noted that of the twelve subjects presented in the table only Léon and Jean have been using French from a rather early age: this situation, as suggested earlier, is due to the fact that subjects generally come from mixed homes where there does not seem to be an African lingua franca.

The intensity or frequency of use and domains in which the foreign language is used have not been fully investigated. But it is clear from the variety and preponderance of African languages used (frequently or infrequently) in the home, that the foreign language is less privileged and that its acquisition by African children below the age of three years cannot but be problematic. The latter view is easily supported, if it is remembered that the acquisition of foreign languages in Africa is generally the result of education. That knowledge of foreign languages tends generally to be limited to the educated and functionally literate is demonstrated by the following extracts translated from French and the tables presented further on.

- "I learnt French by the grammar method, by speech-training and vocabulary exercises" (J'ai appris le français par la leçon de grammaire, par l'élocution et par le vocabulaire"). The speaker is a 15 year-old Ivorian female secondary school pupil.

- "I started learning French in C.P. 1" ("J'ai commencé à étudier le français à partir de C.P. 1"). The speaker, an 18 year-old third form secondary school pupil is male and also Ivorian. C.P. 1 is the first year of primary school.

- "I learnt French by coming to school" ("J'ai appris le français en venant à l'école"). The speaker is a 14 year-old Ivorian female secondary school pupil.

- "I learnt French in the company of pals often speaking French together and doing my best at the orimary school. This is how I have managed to speak French somehow correctly". ("J'ai appris le français en compagnie de mes copains parlant souvent le français en compagnie et en m'efforçant beaucoup à l'école primaire. C'est ainsi que je suis arrivé à parler un peu correctement le français"). The speaker is a 16 year-old Ivorian boy in his first year of secondary school.

- "I learnt French from an elder brother who had trained me while I was little; then I took the preparatory course. He had taught me speech and how to speak French". ("J'ai appris le français par un grand frère qui m'avait entraîné lorsque j'étais petit; puis je faisais le cours préparatoire. Il m'a enseigné en élocution et il m'avait appris à parler le français"). The speaker, a 17 year-old male secondary school pupil uses his native African language, Agni, at home rather infrequently for the reason that his father who is a medical doctor does not normally speak the native language. ("Mon père, c'est un docteur. Il n'a pas l'habitude de parler l'agni et on (ne) parle que le français... à la maison, on parle rarement l'agni. On s'intéresse que le français").

Similar situations in the home are described by other secondary school pupils from different linguistic backgrounds, but of the same age:

- "At home I speak French in particular because my mother forces us to speak French so that each of us may have no great problems on the way." ("À la maison, je parle particulièrement le français parce que ma mère nous oblige de parler le français afin que chacun de nous s'en tire pas mal sur la route quoi").

- "At home we speak French and it is rare that we speak Baule. I learnt French as at school still from my parents. My parents are literate in French, yes". ("À la maison nous parlons le français et c'est rare que nous parlons le baoulé. Le français, je l'ai appris comme à l'école encore par mes parents. Mes parents sont instruits en français, oui.")

In fact, except in the cities where they may be forced to acquire a knowledge of one or another variety of French by the complex sociolinguistic situation, most children have little or no familiarity with the official language before they first go to school between the ages of five and seven years. These observations seem largely valid for most African countries though there are certainly differences of detail.

It may be inferred further from the Table of Linguistic Profiles that certain African languages tend to predominate; this is at least the case for the Ivory Coast where *Baule*, *Agni* and *Diula* have a clear edge over other languages. Consequently, children belonging to different ethnic groups and speaking corresponding languages tend to learn such predominant languages more easily: Amenan, Severin, and Jacqueline for example are Baule but speak Diula and Agni in addition to their mother tongue: Baule. The facility of adding a second African language is perhaps sometimes partly determined by historical or genetic relationship between languages; this would seem to be the case for those Baule children who have acquired a knowledge of Agni. Agni, Baule and Appolo are known to belong to the Akan language group along with Fante, Twi and Nzema in Ghana. And yet those children coming from an Agni background have not acquired a knowledge of Baule; nor has any of the Appolo children acquired a knowledge of either Agni or Baule. Another factor in the addition of a second (African or European) language is the numerical importance of its native speakers and perhaps their political importance also. It is pertinent to mention here that the Akan group in the Ivory Coast is estimated at 2,164,440 speakers including the "Lagoon peoples"; this population constitutes about 50 per cent of the total indigenous population of the country which stood at 5,228,910 inhabitants in 1975. An investigation conducted by the Institute of Applied Linguistics, University of Abidjan, Ivory Coast then outdated by almost a decade (see J. Roggero, 1966) and limited necessarily in scope, but suggestive nonetheless, indicated that out of 850 pupils, representing 850 families, in primary classes 5 and 6 in Abidjan, only 75 spoke French at home. This constitutes 9 per cent of the population investigated. Of the languages used at home, Baule came first, being used in 144 families; Diula second with 103 families and Bete third with 84 families. The respective percentages for the three African languages are 17, 12 and 10. This means that French is the language least used at home; in other words, there is a general tendency among school children to speak native languages rather than French at home. The same situation has been observed for Senegal.

If the survey referred to can be considered as representative of the whole country, then one may say with a fair degree of certainty that no single Ivorian language has a heavy enough concentration of speakers in the capital, Abidjan, to make it an undisputed first choice African lingua franca: since there are at least ten other native languages that are spoken in the capital, this multilingual setting should normally favour the acquisition of French as a lingua franca not only by children but also by adults. And yet this possibility is apparently limited in the Ivory Coast as in other African countries for a number of reasons. African as well as non-African communities are heterogeneous and tend to be regrouped on ethnic lines with as an important consequence fewer social contacts necessitating the use of French as a means of communication between Africans and between Africans and non-Africans. According to the 1975 census the Abidjan population stood at 951,216 people; of this population 356,386 people or 37.5% were non-Ivorian Africans, from Upper Volta, now Burkina Faso, Mali, Guinea, Nigeria and Ghana. The French from France formed 3/4 of the European population of Abidjan which was estimated at some 26,000 people. Apart from French speaking Africans from Burkina Faso, Mali and Guinea, it is certain that communication between Ivorians and English-speaking Nigerians and Ghanaians among others would be in a language other than French or English except perhaps where the two foreign languages are known by the relevant communities or individuals engaged in various linguistic situations or activities. What languages are

likely to serve as vehicular languages or linguae francae are not clear. However, French may be used in one form or another in the Ivory Coast as in other French speaking countries like Senegal in the following contexts:

1) between a non-African and an educated or uneducated African in public services and certain areas of private employment.

2) between an educated African and another educated or an uneducated African (who has learnt French) in public and private life (e.g. government service, stores, restaurants and family).

3) between an uneducated African and another uneducated African in trade (where there is no African lingua franca).

Since the acquisition or learning of French as the official or second language is a function principally of formal education which properly begins at the age of five years and above by which time African children would have already reasonably acquired one African language or another, two assumptions may legitimately be made:

1) African children with a knowledge of French will use French only where their African languages cannot serve them in their social interaction;

2) their attempts at acquiring and using French will be affected or hampered by their previous linguistic experience. (For attempts to identify African mother tongue influences see E.N. Kwofie, 1976 and 1977 among several others referred to there).

By virtue of its being largely limited to educated milieux and educational institutions and in view of the high rate of illiteracy in French in Africa (cf. P. Alexandre, 1971) French language acquisition would seem to affect relationships between the different age groups of those countries where it is an official language. It will be observed for example from the tables that follow that the younger generations in the Ivory Coast and Senegal are more favoured than the older generations in terms of literacy as far as this can be correlated with a knowledge of French. The more young people receive their education in French or generally a foreign language, the more easily will they come to speak it and be involved in its use. A possible consequence of this will be the restructuring of society, the disruption of the former cohesion of ethnic/linguistic communities through the restriction of the use of native languages to older, unlettered people and the creation of status groups as has been recorded in different terms by A. Colot (1963) for the Senegalese situation:

> Whereas the Coranic school taught him (i.e. the Senegalese child) to be disciplined and self reliant and did not alienate him from his traditional milieu, the French school is going to integrate him into a world on whose doorstep his parents somehow abandon him.

The fact that instruction in public (formal) schools is provided in French is considered by some parents as marking a break with tradition and African culture and hence a sort of alienation of children from their parents. The problem of alienation, of depersonalization consequent upon the introduction into Africa of "French education" or of Western education generally is an important theme in such novels as *L'Aventure ambigüe* (Julliard, 1961) by Cheikh Hamidou Kane, *L'Enfant noir* (Plon, 1953) by Camara Laye. Arabic, the vehicle of Islam is not considered to exert any "unhealthy" cultural influence on the African child presumably because it is not identified with the "whiteman" and "white colonization". This negative parental attitude to French seems widespread, and manifests itself today in the insistence on, and advocacy of the acquisition of the African mother tongues first

before that of the 'second', 'official' or foreign language and that, in spite of pressures of various kinds: educational, economic, psychological, etc. One cannot generalise the attitudes of Africans to French language acquisition, but is seems possible to distinguish two main reactions which may be described as "traditionalist" on the one hand and as "modernist" or "realist" on the other. The same parent may be "traditionalist" or "modernist" depending on the context in which he finds himself or he may be both at the same time. Consider for example the following views expressed by two highly educated Ivorians in response to how they would teach their children their African mother tongue or French; the first view is expressed by a 21 year-old woman from a linguistically nixed home; the second by a 24 year-old male Public Works Engineer:

> "on n'a pas encore envisagé ce problème parce que plutôt maintenant, les jeunes ménages ont tendances à parler le français aux enfants. Ce n'est peut-être pas une bonne méthode, mais d'une part les enfants sont favorisés à l'école et pourraient parler le français à peu près au même titre que les petits Français eux-mêmes. Seulement, entre temps, de temps en temps, il faudrait quand même que les enfants apprennent la langue maternelle pour ne pas la perdre."
>
> (I have not thought about this problem because young couples now tend to speak French to their children. This is perhaps not a good method but on the one hand children are at an advantage in school and would be able to speak French more or less like French children. It would be necessary nonetheless, from time to time for children to learn their mother tongue so as not to lose it).
>
> "Je crois que je ferais le contraire de ce qui se passe actuellement, c'est-à-dire, mes enfants parleront le français à la maison pendant les neuf mois de scolarité et les trois mois de vacances je les enverrai au village où ils apprendront quelques mots de notre langue maternelle avec le grand-père ou bien la grand-mère... Je les obligerai à parler souvent le français entre eux, parmi leurs camarades."
>
> (I think I would do the opposite of what actually happens, in other words, my children will speak French at home during the nine months they are in school; during the three months of holiday I shall send them to the village where they will learn a few words of our mother tongue from their grandfather or grandmother. I will force them to speak French often among themselves, and with their friends).

Without repeating what these young people have said, I think there are a few important observations that need to be highlighted; they are namely, that:

1. Most young educated parents consider French as an indispensable language the formal teaching of which predisposes the African children to learn it presumably with the same zeal as French children and to attain the same level of competence.

2. In spite of the preference shown for French, African languages should not be allowed to disappear through disuse or nonuse by the younger generations. Teaching or learning of African languages may be occasional and not specifically systematic or formal.

3. The most significant method or way of teaching African children their mother tongues or of making them acquire such languages is that of using grandparents as teachers. Grandparents in the general view of Africans are custodians of authentic African cultural values and therefore presumably also of the "correct" and "acceptable" forms of African languages.

4. French is a far more important language than African languages, requiring greater attention and more time.

TABLE 2 A:

IVORY COAST

MALE POPULATION (in Percentage)

TABLES EXEMPLIFYING A KNOWLEDGE OF FRENCH
BY SOME AFRICAN POPULATIONS

(Populations are Classified According to Categories,
Administrative Regions, Sex and Age Groups from 14 Years Upwards)

REGION	AGE GROUPS							
	15-19	20-24	25-29	30-34	35-39	40-44	45 and above	Total
Abengourou	15	23	10	8	7	7	3	14
Bouake	12	4	2	1	1	1	-	2.9
Gagnoa	46	14	6	4	1	-	-	11
Korhogo	2	1	-	-	-	-	-	0.7
Man	8	5	3	-	-	-	-	-
Odienne	12	4	2	1	1	1	-	2.7
TOTAL	25	10	4	3	2	2	0.6	8

TABLE 2B:

IVORY COAST

FEMALE POPULATION (in Percentage)

REGION	AGE GROUPS							
	15-19	20-24	25-29	30-34	35-39	40-44	45 and above	Total
Abengourou	9	2	-	-	-	-	-	2
Bouake	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Gagnoa	7	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Korhogo	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.5
Man	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Odienne	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
TOTAL	4	0.4	-	-	-	-	-	0.6

Tables 2A & 2B have been reproduced from the Ivory Coast's Ministry of Planning's handbook entitled *Population* 1965, (published July 1967). The Tables are based on a survey undertaken in 1963.

TABLE 3 A:

SENEGAL

MALE POPULATION

REGION	Do not understand	Understand	Speak	Read	Write	Undeclared	TOTAL
Capvert	49,220 - 43%	11,540	13,620 - 11%	640	38,520	40	113,580
Casamance	123,620 - 83%	6,540	4,960 - 3%	180	13,020	180	148,500
Diourbel	130,740 - 92%	3,740	2,840 - 2%	120	3,660	-	141,100
Fleuve	62,660 - 79%	5,900	4,000 - 5%	100	6,420	200	79,280
Sen-Oriental	41,560 - 93%	860	1,740 - 3%	40	300	-	44,400
Sine Saloum	168,780 - 80%	9,820	6,640 - 3%	560	22,640	40	208,480
Thies	89,820 - 82%	5,260	4,460 - 4%	220	9,720	40	109,520
TOTAL	666,300 - 78%	43,660	38,260 - 4%	1,860	94,280	500	844,860

Reproduced from A. Thiriet 1964/5: A.9 except for percentages under the "speak" column.

TABLE 3 B:

SENEGAL

FEMALE POPULATION

REGION	Do not understand	Understand	Speak	Read	Write	Undeclared	TOTAL
Capvert	102,460 - 92%	1,100	1,580 - 1%	20	5,700	40	110,600
Casamance	154,620 - 98%	340	240 - 0.2%	60	1,900	200	156,360
Diourbel	162,440 - 99%	60	140 - 0.1%	-	400	-	163,040
Fleuve	105,680 - 98%	260	160 - 0.2%	-	1,040	20	107,160
Sen-Oriental	49,820 - 100%	-	-	-	-	-	49,820
Sine Saloum	216,940 - 98%	620	380 - 0.2%	40	2,560	20	220,560
Thies	120,340 - 98%	460	200 - 0.2%	-	1,240	80	122,320
TOTAL	912,000 - 98%	2,840	2,700 - 0.2%	120	12,840	360	930,860

According to A. Thiriet 1964/5: A.9 except for percentages under the "speak" column.

TABLE 4 A:

SENEGAL

MALE POPULATION (Numbers in Thousands)

AGE	Do not understand	Understand	Speak	Read	Write	Undeclared	TOTAL
14 years	14.1 - 64%	0.1	0.1 - 0.4%	-	7.5	-	21.8
15-19 years	77.8 - 75%	2.4	1.5 - 1%	0.1	20.7	-	102.5
20-24 years	79.4 - 77%	4.2	3.2 - 5%	0.2	14.7	0.1	101.8
25-29 years	74.9 - 79%	6.0	5.7 - 4%	0.2	12.3	0.1	119.2
30-34 years	79.0 - 77%	5.8	6.8 - 6%	0.3	9.9	0.1	101.9
35-39 years	69.1 - 78%	5.4	5.3 - 5%	0.2	8.3	0.1	88.4
40-44 years	52.7 - 76%	5.8	4.1 - 5%	-	6.2	-	68.8
45-49 years	55.6 - 78%	4.9	3.7 - 5%	0.5	5.7	0.1	70.5
50-54 years	41.6 - 81%	3.0	2.3 - 4%	0.1	4.0	-	51.0
55-59 years	35.8 - 84%	2.0	2.0 - 4%	0.1	2.7	-	42.6
60 and above	79.0 - 88%	4.1	3.7 - 5%	0.1	2.4	-	89.4
TOTAL	679.0 - 77%	43.7	38.4 - 4%		94.5	0.5	857.9

Reproduced from L. Verriere 1968 p. 77 except for percentages which I have worked out.

TABLE 4 B:

SENEGAL

FEMALE POPULATION (Numbers in Thousands)

AGE	Do not understand	Understand	Speak	Read	Write	Undeclared	TOTAL
14 years	13.3 - 85%	-	-	-	2.3	-	15.6
15-19 years	122.0 - 94%	0.7	0.6 - .4%	0.1	5.7	0.2	129.3
20-24 years	136.5 - 97%	0.5	0.7 - .5%	-	2.2	-	139.9
25-29 years	159.2 - 98%	0.6	0.4 - .2%	-	1.2	-	161.4
30-34 years	108.1 - 98%	0.3	0.5 - .4%	-	0.7	-	109.6
35-39 years	93.6 - 99%	0.2	0.1 - .1%	-	0.3	-	94.2
40-44 years	64.6 - 99%	0.1	0.1 - .1%	-	0.2	0.1	65.1
45-49 years	59.6 - 99%	0.2	-	-	0.1	-	60.0
50-54 years	42.1 - 99%	-	0.1 - .2%	-	-	-	42.2
55-59 years	30.7 - 99%	0.1	0.1 - .4%	-	-	-	30.9
60 and above	81.7 - 99%	0.1	0.1 - .1%	-	0.1	-	81.9
TOTAL	911.4 - 97%	2.8	2.7 - 0.2%	0.1	12.8	0.3	930.1

According to A. Verriere 1965 p. 77 except for percentages which I have worked out.

Despite the numerous inadequacies that may be detected in the foregoing tables and the obvious incomparable differences between the tables for the Ivory Coast and Senegal, one may nonetheless deduce the following information from the tables:

(i) although the tables for both Senegal and the Ivory Coast do not account for subjects between the ages of 5 and 13 years and therefore for the school age or child population, literacy in French would seem to start at 15 years for both Senegal and the Ivory Coast; literacy is thus a function of primary education. It is non-existent after 30 years for the Ivory Coast, while this is the case only after 45 years for Senegal. Illiteracy consequently seems pronounced in these countries among people aged between 30 years and 45 years and 45 years upwards. This initial picture may have changed since many more children have conceivably become educated and thus literate in French, But aspects of these observations may still be valid. Notice that some 20 years have passed since these investigations were conducted;

(ii) literacy is higher among men than among women, conversely most Senegalese and Ivorian women are illiterate in French; it is interesting to observe that about five times as many Senegalese women can write French than can speak the language: the type of French written is however not specified;

(iii) the level of literacy is significantly higher in centres of social activity, and in regions immediately adjacent or contiguous to the regions where the capital city is located;

(iv) the majority of the Senegalese and Ivorian populations - about 90% - do not possess a knowledge of spoken French.

Against this sociolinguistic background it would seem only reasonable, given its official status and role in the lives of African children, to consider French as a language that should be specially taught or adapted in educational institutions and helped to spread over the rest of each country where it is adopted as the language of education and government. It is conceivable that the 10% of the Ivorian and Senegalese populations who possess a knowledge of French will and can sustain such knowledge only if local or national conditions are conducive; in other words, knowledge of French can be utilised and kept active only if local and national institutions demand the use of French, or if the use of French is a precondition for the success of African social interaction.

Since, as has been observed above, literacy in French is higher among men than among women in Africa, at least in Senegal and the Ivory Coast, it can be easily conceived that interaction in French between mothers and their school-going children will be either non-existent or impossible in the overwhelming majority of African homes. On the other hand, father-son/daughter French interaction will be more frequent. Where there are two or more children of school going age within the same family, interaction in French is indeed highly probable even where the parents are not literate in French. Where parents are illiterate in French, interaction between school children and their parents can take place only in a common African lingua franca. It is however also conceivable that in a family with school children possessing a knowledge of the foreign language, parents who are not literate in the foreign language may endeavour to acquire a knowledge of it from their children and perhaps thereby encourage them in their studies and their attempt at getting integrated into the educated groups, the foreign language being regarded as the key to socio-economic and educational advancement or success.

2.3 Reflections on aspects of language acquisition theories and French language learning

Language acquisition has been viewed by some scholars (e.g. E.H. Lenneberg and L. Carmichael among others) from a biological perspective, that is as a species-specific feature, the result of evolution and genetics. If scholars adopting this view have, like their predecessors, been still largely unable to offer a comprehensive biological theory of language acquisition, they have certainly provided useful insights into this interesting question of universal relevance.

In 1966, Lenneberg for example had observed that children's language acquisition follows a regular schedule: "There is a very orderly progression from pure crying to additional cooing sounds, then babbling and the introduction of intonation patterns". In a chapter of a book he edited, Lenneberg (1964:66) is even more explicit:

> The onset of speech is an extremely regular phenomenon, appearing at a certain time in the child's physical development and following a fixed sequence of events, as if all children followed the same general "strategy" from the time they begin to the period at which they have mastered the art of speaking (...). The first things that are learned are principles - not items: principles of categorization and pattern perception.

Reflecting on the acquisition of speech by the child, David Abercrombie (1965:123) also suggests that it is "principles", not discrete units, that are learnt. These principles, identified with "patterns of movement", have basic physiological parameters and are developmental in nature. Abercrombie is of course concerned here with the acquisition of phonetic/phonological features of language.

> I simply dont believe that the child, in acquiring speech, learns a series of separate units or items, which are the phoneme - representing segments, and strings them together, with varying degrees of success, at the same time superimposing on the string the rhythm of syllable - succession and the melodies of intonation. I suggest that what the child learns are patterns of movement which are quite large in time, and it learns them at first sketchily and roughly, filling them in, in more detail, as it improves.

Lenneberg's views, which seem to be supported by Abercrombie's explicit formulation, suggest that language acquisition is two-dimensional; it implies the idea of innateness or innate predispositions and the idea of maturation. Although the two dimensions are intimately related they are given unequal emphasis by scholars. The idea of innateness is emphasized by Noam Chomsky (1959, 1968), for example, who writes (1968:174) specifically as follows:

> An innate schematism is proposed, correctly or incorrectly, as an empirical hypothesis to explain the uniformity, specificity, and richness of detail and structure of the grammars that are, in fact, constructed and used by the person who has mastered the language.

The role of "explanation" and "instruction" which are fairly generally recognized as important ingredients in language acquisition or learning is minimised by Chomsky (1968:175):

> The second-language learner, like the first-language learner, has somehow established the facts for himself, without explanation or instruction (...) Only a trivial part of the knowledge that the second-language learner acquires is presented to him by direct instruction.

The idea of maturation, on the other hand, is clearly prevalent in L. Carmichael (1964:14, 15):

> ... it seems obvious that the receptor mechanisms and the motor mechanisms of speech are functional at birth and even before birth. Some postnatal development of these mechanisms does take place, but clearly, postnatal linguistic growth is largely dependent on the maturation of specific brain mechanisms. These are the brain centers that are known to be essential in adult speech ... In other words, in postnatal life of the infant certain centers of the brain of the growing infant must reach a specific level of development before learning of linguistic patterns that are "meaningful" is possible.

H.E. Palmer (1964), however, considers both innateness and maturation as relevant factors in second language acquisition (see below).

It is generally known to linguists that by an early age children learn without direct instruction, on the basis of the speech that they hear, the largest part of the grammar of their native language (see for example H.E. Palmer, 1964:6). It has also come to be accepted that environment, by which term are implied physical, cognitive, cultural and social factors, plays an important role in language acquisition and use (cf. E. Sapir, 1914). It seems clear then that the learning of a specific language depends to an extent on the interaction of innate dispositions, which are considered to characterise all human beings, with the environment, which cannot but be that of the language and the learner. Given that there are differences in the cultures and physical environments of different speech communities but not in innate dispositions any attempt to explain language acquisition must take into account such differences from the point of view of how they influence language acquisition.

Now, most of the foregoing observations have been made with regard to first language acquisition and may be considered valid for second language, hence French language acquisition in Africa only if it can be demonstrated that the interaction between innate dispositions and environment is identical in both cases. Such demonstration would seem to be impossible in view of the fact that no theory has yet been developed by psychologists or linguists to provide a complete account for children's first language learning ability. Even though the proposal of a universal innate mechanism is an attractive "empirical hypothesis", it has remained hitherto largely unverified, or unconfirmed. That this should have been so is not surprising for Chomsky's proposal (1968:187-188) seems to have espoused or partaken of the complexity of the problem it was expected to help to elucidate. Language acquisition which is part of the general problem of learning or knowledge is not only a physiological problem but also a neurological and psychological problem. We know that neurophysiological or neurological questions are generally empirically intractable. Formulated in "developmental terms" as it is, the proposal of a universal innate mechanism was bound in the beginning to be empirically unverifiable or at least of minimal functionality.

> In the case of language acquisition, furthermore, it must be emphasized that the model I am suggesting can at best only be regarded as a first approximation to a theory of learning, since it is an instantaneous model and does not try to capture the interplay between hypotheses that the child may construct, new date interpreted in terms of these hypotheses, new hypotheses based on these interpretations, and so

> on, until some relatively fixed system of competence is established... an instantaneous model ... as any other aspect of research strategy must ultimately be evaluated in terms of its success in providing explanations and insights.

The problem of accounting for second language acquisition has generally been simplified by the application of what is known of first language learning to second language acquisition on the basis of analogy; theoreticians of second language acquisition tend to simplify or modify the basic hypothesis by having recourse to the factor of age and the observable phenomenon of interaction or contact between the two languages involved in the performance of given individuals: children and adults. H.E. Palmer (1964:42; 7-8) for example makes the following observations with reference to Belgian children using English:

> When we are young we form new habits with facility; (...). When we are older we form new habits with greater difficulty and certainly with greater reluctance.
>
> ...in some instances the possession of the first language did interfere with the proper acquiring of the second. What was the determining factor? To what was due this differentiation? We find that in most cases the child was of a riper age, he had arrived at the age of intelligence, and had been forced to use his rudimentary intelligence as a means towards learning English.

Given the environment of French, that is the social and cultural context of the language, the ages of the subjects presented in the table of linguistic profiles, it may be observed that the subjects have in several cases already acquired a first language and reached "the age of intelligence" before undertaking the learning of French and consequently that the first language which is invariably African would "interfere with the proper acquiring of the second" - French (see W.F. Mackey, 1965a: 100-134 for a discussion of the role of age in language learning).

Differences in the French language performance of African children and of French children of comparable ages may consequently be explained mainly in terms of environment, that is in terms of physical, cognitive, cultural and social factors, innate dispositions being considered as largely invariant. Of the factors identified under environment only the social and cultural would seem to be directly amenable to analysis, at least in the present context. I shall therefore henceforth endeavour to determine how the characteristics of the French used by some of the African children presented earlier may be explained in terms of the two factors: the social and cultural. I shall for the sake of convenience, but justifiably assume that the cultural factor is broadly describable as linguistic (cf. chapter 1); in other words, the cultural factor will be assimilated to the linguistic. However, aspects of the structures of African languages will be invoked in an attempt to explain phenomena only where necessary or where a suspected cross association seems obvious.

2.4 Some characteristics of the French used by African children

To characterise the linguistic performance of any speaker satisfactorily the analyst needs to observe the speaker in a variety of situations. My remarks on the linguistic performance of my subjects cannot therefore claim to be definitive in so far as they are based on extremely limited data collected within periods varying only between 10 and 30 minutes and are constituted largely by answers to questions and by story telling. The type of data in question is however adequate for the determination of individual and collective linguistic features, and the influence of social and cultural-linguistic factors in the learning of French by subjects.

The speech of N'zoa who is 13 years old and Agni (see The Table of Linguistic Profiles) is marked by the following phonetic features:

e > ɛ thus *j'ai* (ʒe) is pronounced as (ʒɛ)
ʒ > ʃ thus *gens* (ʒɑ̃) is pronounced as (ʃɑ̃)
jour (ʒur) is pronounced as (ʃu:)
d and t are affricated; thus *dit* becomes (dzi)
parti becomes (partsi)

r > zero in final position except in cases of liaison or sandhi some of which are peculiar to N'zoa.

Thus *jour* is pronounced in several instances as

[ʃu:] or [ʒu:] e.g. [œ̃ ʃu:lə məsjø] but [sa ʃabre] (sa chambre et...)
[œ̃ bo ʒurakɔ:] **(un beau jour encore)**
[ynistwar arakɔ̃te] **(une histoire à raconter)**
ə > e Thus *demande* (dəmãde) becomes [demade] in numerous cases; *le* becomes [le] and yet the subject realises correctly the ə - sound in several cases;
e.g. revenant > rəvənɑ̃
je > ʒə

A feature which makes this subject's speech sound "archaic" is the frequent occurrence of the sound ɛ where [e] and [a] are normally used in spoken Parisian French.

Thus for example *elle avait trouvé des gens; elle les a salués*...becomes [ɛlavɛ truve dɛ ʒɑ̃ ɛllɛ zasalye].

Some of the features identified in the speech of N'zoa also appear in that of Louis:

e > ɛ as in *les* (les hommes) *des* (bagues), j'*ai* (je?/j'ai (l'ai/le) pris). As in J'*ai* douze ans
ə > e as in *cela, devant* etc.
ʒ > ʃ as in *rouge*: ruʒ > ruʃ
g > ʝ as in *bagage*.

A rather interesting peculiarity of Louis is the frequent pronunciation of [ə] as [i] in *le* (the); thus he says [libarik] for *le baril* (bari) or *le baricaut* (bariko), possibly *la barrique*: all of which words represent "barrel", or "keg"; [li væ̃] for *le vin* [lə vɛ̃] "wine", etc. [ʒite] for [ʒəte]. [i] also occurs frequently in place of other vowel sounds like [y], [ɛ] and [e]: thus [ʒifka] appears in place of [ʒyska]; [dɔnɪ mwa] in place of [dɔne mwa].

Like Louis and N'zoa, Assale and Amenan also pronounce [ʒɛ] for [ʒe]; they say respectively [ʒɛ̃zã] and [ʒɛtrɛzã]. The feature of affrication which was identified in the speech of N'zoa appears in one item in the speech of Amenan. *Dioula* is pronounced as [dziula]. The suppression or non-pronunciation of final [r] in words like *frère, nourrir* also characterises the speech of Amenan and Assale. While both Assale and Amenan pronounce [ɛ] in sequences like *les* and *des* where [e] would seem to be more frequently used, the pronunciation of [e] in place of [ə] is more a characteristic of Amenan than Assale.

The rather limited nature of the corpus collected for Severin does not permit any useful comparisons between Severin's speech and that of other subjects. This is a pity since Severin is one of the subjects who use French at home. The only feature that has been identified is the inappropriate, repeated pronunciation of [ə] as [ɛ] in the sequence [ɔnuzɛpamɔ̃tre] (on ne nous a pas montré). Christian's speech is comparable to that of Louis by the appearance of [i] in place of [ə]. [i] occurs however in only two instances: [ʒə] becomes [ʒi] in [ʒimapɛl] and [lə] becomes [li] in [lifrãsɛ].

Catherine and Pascal who are both 11 years old pronounce j'*ai* as [ʒɛ] just like Louis, N'zoa, Assale and Amenan. Pascal also suppresses his final r's in words like *cultivateur* and *jour*. An additional feature which appears in his speech is the pronunciation of the French [y] - sound as [i] just like Louis - *cultivateur* is pronounced thrice as [kiltivatɛ] and once correctly with [y]; [ə] in [ʒə] becomes [i] in the sequence [kevøtyke ʒitɔfraneʃãʒ]. Like Amenan, Catherine frequently uses [e] where [əɪ] is required as in words like *de ce petit, le* roi, *recevoir*.

Of all the subjects so far considered Leon seems to present the greatest number of features worthy of note. On his own admission, Leon uses French at home; he is only seven years old and yet is already near the end of his primary studies: he has only one year to complete his studies at that level. Surprisingly however, one finds not only those features already identified in the speech of the previous subjects but also other characteristics like the replacement of ʒ by t four times, of ʒ by j; the affrication of ʃ thus making it tʃ in *chacun*, the replacement of *u* by *o* in *étourdi* and *pourri*; the suppression of consonants other than final r; e.g. *tout le monde* becomes [tulmɔ̃-]; one also notices a confusion between ɛ and ɔ in [bɛl pɔm] (fine apple) which becomes [bɔl pɔ̃m], *prends* [prã] (take becomes [plɔ̃] and raconter (tell, relate) is pronounced as [rãkɔ̃te] (inistwa), a possible confusion with *rencontrer* (meet). Leon's "success" in his studies or educational development is remarkable in view of the widespread nature of his communication (phonological/phonetic) difficulties. Perhaps are the difficulties "accidental" in this corpus rather than characteristic of his general use of French.

An examination of the syntax and vocabulary also turns up interesting facts: there is an improper mixture of verbal tenses which suggests that knowledge of the French verb system is not firm yet; the sentences are also not coherent: there are either no appropriate syntactic links or there are wrong uses of grammatical elements. Consider the following extract from a narrative by N'zoa (The original has been translated here as faithfully as possible).

> Il était une fois une jeune fille à l'âge de se marier chaque fois quand les gens lui demandaient en mariage elle refusait. Un jour, il y avait un revenant qui s'est changé en homme et il es (t) allé chez la fille. Quand la fille lui (sic) a vu, elle a commencé à sourire...
>
> (Once upon a time a girl of marriageable age each time when people asked her in marriage she refused; one day, there was a ghost who changed himself into a man and he went to the girl's house. When the girl saw him (=wrong pronoun in French), she began to smile...)

It may be observed in addition that there is a mixture of literary or rare and colloquial expressions. Thus for example Leon uses the following two expressions in the same narrative, the first being usual or normal, the other being infrequent and literary: "*prends* cette route" et "moi j'*emprunterai* celle-là".

Considering the social background of French in Africa it does not seem possible to sustain the hypothesis that African children acquire their French from their parents; at least those children whose French has been briefly examined, have not acquired their type of French from their parents

because many of their parents have no knowledge of French. The problem of the role of society in language learning or acquisition as partly reflected in relationships within the family is raised for example in the following observation by a 21 year-old female Ivorian undergraduate (see E.N. Kwofie, 1968:205; the text is edited. Compare also some of the observations in section 2.2).

> Le langage dans la famille, c'est très utile. Par exemple, les petits Français à table, quand les parents parlent, ils apprennent de nouveaux mots, raison pour laquelle, ils sont d'ailleurs avantagés en français. Alors que je... on a un problème qui se pose parce que à l'école, on parle le français et à la maison, les parents ne parlent presque pas le français ou ne discutent jamais de sorte que nous sommes obligées de parler la langue maternelle, et on n'avance vraiment pas dans le domaine de la langue française.
>
> (Language within the family is very useful. For example, at table, French children learn new words when their parents speak; this is besides why they have advantage in French (language use). We have a problem: because at school we speak French and at home parents almost do not speak French or discuss (anything in French) so that we are forced to speak the mother tongue, and we do not really make progress in (the area of) French language).

With regard to aspects of the data presented above, it is possible that words like *j'ai* pronounced as [ʒɛ], *des* and *les* realised by all of my subjects with the [ɛ] - sound have a common source: is it not the orthoepic norm, a reflection of the pedagogical norm? What seems certain is that this particular pronunciation cannot be attributed to any mother tongue influence: all the African languages spoken by subjects have the phonemic contrasts of e/ɛ a/ɛ e/a. What seems to be an African language influence is the frequent replacement of /ə/ by /e/ by several of the subjects: this is presumably because the languages involved have no unit comparable to the French /ə/. The assumption that the replacement of /ə/ by /e/ is an African language is based on the idea of *frequency of occurrence* (cf. chapter 3); it may also be surmised that the suppression of final /r/ is not unconnected with African language structure: Assale and N'zoa both belong to the same language background: Agni. However, this feature has also been identified in Amenan's speech. Since Amenan is Baule, we need further evidence from Baule, presumably based on a comparison between the structures of Agni and Baule, before we can make valid or definite generalizations about the status of "r-deletion" in French language learning by African children. One also requires further evidence to determine the status or source of the feature of affrication observed in the speech of Leon who is Appolo/Abure, Amenan who is Baule and N'zoa who is Agni. The other characteristics seem to be largely idiosyncratic and may be described as "accidental", and of no general significance.

2.5 Conclusion: African child language learning requires closer attention

The data presented on the use of French in Section 2.4 are indeed not extensive. There is no discussion of the role of imitation and cognition, both of which are pertinent factors in language acquisition; nor has there been any attempt to relate to my reflections the many studies devoted to the acquisition of syntax and other aspects of language for other environments (e.g. L. Lentin 1975; R. Brown and U. Bellugi, 1964:131-161 and S.M. Ervin, 1964:163-189). As D.I. Slobin, (1971:115) has remarked, it is difficult to separate the role of language from the entire range of experience in the context of formal education. This study is therefore, obviously, incomplete. What I have done is to examine the linguistic situation in Africa, using the Ivory Coast and Senegal as examples from the standpoint of how that situation affects French language learning by children. This was the major objective of the presentation of the empirical data reported on in preceding pages.

Since the bulk of the African population is illiterate in French, and since not all school children come from educated homes, it can hardly be said that children who are able to use French have acquired their different degrees of mastery of the language from their parents; in other words, the African children examined have not learnt French without direct instruction; their knowledge of French is largely the result of conscious, formalized efforts. Second/foreign language acquisition being almost completely limited to the schools, teachers seem largely to provide models for African school children who by their interaction also provide models for one another.

Leon A. Jakobovits (1972) has observed that language learning in the classroom lacks authenticity and could be considered as pathological especially if it is not *functional* for communicative purposes in the home:

> The artificial learning of a natural human language constitutes either a pathology or a highly specialized, exceptional, non-ordinary activity. In either case, only a minute proportion of the general population can be reasonably expected to succeed at it.

I provided a few examples earlier of parental influence in French language learning in educated homes: some parents compel their school going children to speak the language among themselves even where they themselves are illiterate in the language; or else they speak the language to their children to encourage them to learn and improve upon their knowledge.

A possible line of investigation in African child French language acquisition is consequently to determine the exact role of teachers and parents with reference to other factors that may be identified for specific African settings, such as the role of African language structures, and of the community or society at large. For, as U. Weinreich (1966:4) has lucidly observed, the influence of one language on another can be best understood only within the broad psychological and socio-cultural setting of the language in contact.

PART TWO

HISTORICAL-COMPARATIVE ASPECTS

CHAPTER 3

SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION: THE FRENCH EXAMPLE AND LINGUISTIC EVOLUTION*

3.1 Introduction: Language change: Some suggested factors and characteristics

Language change - phonological, morphological and lexical (semantic) - is undoubtedly a very complex phenomenon. This complexity stems from the very nature and functions of language, namely that language is essentially a mode of assigning "conventional, voluntarily articulated sounds or their equivalents, to the diverse elements of experience" (cf. E. Sapir, 1921:11); and that the elements of experience which correspond to psychological processes, responses to sensations; thinking and feeling (cf. K.L. Pike, 1954:5) change with time. "Language", Edward Sapir (1921:150) had observed nearly sixty years ago, "moves down time in a current ot its own making. It has a drift. If there were no breaking up of a language into dialects, if each language continued as a firm, self-contained unity, it would still be constantly moving away from any assignable norm, developing new features increasingly and gradually transforming itself into a language so different from its starting point as to be in effect a new language".

I do not intend to re-examine here diverse opinions expressed on the causes of linguistic change (see U. Weinreich, W. Labov & M.I. Herzog, 1968, S. Ullmann, 1964:193-235, R.D. King, 1969 and R.A. Jacobs, 1975, among others for discussion of various aspects of the question). What I propose to do in this chapter is to single out for comment aspects of those causes of linguistic change which are demonstrably clearly applicable to or identifiable in French language learning situations in Africa.

Language change entails the simplification or complexification of a pattern: a word, a grammatical element, a locution, a sound or an accent. Such simplification or its reverse may be due to (i) analogy, interpreted by some as "rule application", (ii) borrowing or interference or (iii) the role of functional load. *Analogy*, *borrowing* or *interference* and *functional load* as factors of linguistic change are by no means mutually exclusive. Functional load has to do, primarily, with *linguistic structure* which according to U. Weinreich et al (1968:187-8) "includes the orderly differentiation of speakers and styles through rules which govern variation in the speech community". While analogy is a *process* with a psychological basis involving the law of least effort or economy, borrowing or interference is, essentially, the *incidence of contact* between people, cultures and languages; differently expressed, borrowing or interference may be dependent on *analogy* and *linguistic structure*.

Now, analogy and linguistic structure may be responsible for such phenomena as metathesis, assimilation, dissimilation, consonant cluster simplification on the phonological level; on the grammatical level, they may lead to morphological simplification or obliteration of distinctions; to the creation or loss of syntactic distinctions, and the production of constructions not permitted in the language among others; the effects of analogy and linguistic structure on the lexicon include semantic extensions, metaphor and neologisms, semantic differentiation, the disappearance of synonyms, etc. (cf. for example E. Bourciez, 1956 and W.D. Elcock, 1960). The three above mentioned factors of language change are often presented and discussed in the literature under such labels as

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*This chapter is based on two essays: (i) "Second Language Acquisition: The French Example, Pidginisation and Creolisation" presented at the Workshop on Pidgins and Creoles at the XIIth International Congress of Linguists, Vienna, August-September 1977 and (ii) "Second Language Acquisition and Linguistic Evolution" prepared for the IVth International Conference on Historical Linguistics, Stanford, March 1979. No technical distinction is made here between "learning" and "acquisition".

"internal" and "external" pressures, "systemic" and "intersystemic" factors (for discussions of the notion of *analogy* see F.W. Householder, 1971:61-80; R.D. King, 1969:127-139, and W.P. Lehman (1962, 1972:198-200).

The notion of functional load as a factor of linguistic change appears in Leonard Bloomfield's (1933:327-8) statement on stylistic variation:

> Every speaker is constantly adapting his speech habits to those of his interlocutors: he gives up forms he has been using, adopts new ones, and perhaps oftenest of all, changes the frequency of speech forms without abandoning old ones or accepting any that are really new to him.

Notice that this statement applies to monolingual as well as to bilingual or multilingual communities and individuals. Consider E. Haugen's (1950) comparable observation on language contact:

> Every speaker attempts to reproduce previously learned linguistic patterns in an effort to cope with new linguistic situations. Among the patterns he may learn are those of a language different from his own. If he reproduces new linguistic patterns, not in the context of the language in which he learned them but in the context of another, he may be said to have borrowed them from one language into another.

The difference in Bloomfield's and Haugen's formulations derives from the difference in contexts. In language contact situations, the idea of frequency of occurrence or functional load is interpretable, it seems to me, as the possible replacement of a more frequent unit or feature within the 'foreign' language by a correspondingly frequent unit or feature in the mother tongue or at least in the repertoire of the speaker without the two units or features in question being necessarily structurally commensurable (cf. E.N. Kwofie, 1976); the replacement may be made at any of the linguistic levels: phonetic/phonological, grammatical, lexical/semantic.

Writing some twenty years after Bloomfield and with a great deal of linguistic data as base André Martinet (1955:54) had suggested in much more precise terms that linguistic change is due partly to the frequency of occurrence - functional load - of given contrasts:

> All things being equal, is a phonological opposition serving to maintain distinctions among hundreds of very frequent and useful words not less likely to be lost than one which is limited to a very small number of cases?

In illustration of this idea, Martinet (1955:57-8) cites the following examples from French phonology:

> In the case of <u>certain</u> confusions (/ ɛ̃ / - / œ̃ / in Parisian French) it may be observed that the functional yield is extremely low... but the functional yield of the opposition / õ / - / ã / is <u>high</u> and the distinction is well maintained.

H.M. Hoenigswald (1960:79) in his general discussion of language change seemed to endorse Martinet's view when he said: "if a particular contrast is little used in the language, its elimination will do less harm than the elimination of a contrast with a high functional load".

It seems clear then that the functional load of a given phonological contrast is *one* of the factors in its maintenance or elimination.

Reviewing the possibilities and limitations of the functional load idea, R.S. Meyerstein (1970) has however observed that there is generally no indication by proponents of the idea as to "how high" the functional load of a given contrast must be within the language in order to prevent its elimination. There are other factors such as syllabic structure which may reduce or even undo the effect of functional load.

Whatever the theoretical difficulties, it seems quite certain that linguistic evolution may be partly explained in terms of the role of functional load; the case of the ɛ̃/œ̃ contrast evoked by A. Martinet is corroborated by evidence provided by A. Valdman (1959).

If linguistic evolution is correctly attributed to the causes suggested above, namely linguistic interference or borrowing presupposing language contact, analogy and functional load, then the acquisition of French as a second language clearly shares some of the features involved in pidginisation and creolisation (see below). The phenomenon of linguistic interference for example applies to all three stages of linguistic evolution: second language acquisition, pidginisation and creolisation. The main difference between these stages lies in the fact that second language acquisition, which obviously represents the onset of linguistic evolution through contact, is characterised by structural instability whereas a pidgin excludes such a feature because there has been in the course of its development a progressive elimination of negative transfers. Now, structural instability is not unconnected with the fact that interference phenomena may be transitional or may become permanent, or are either individual or common to a group of speakers (cf. E. Haugen, 1956:12). The interesting theoretical problem that arises is how to determine the distance between the three stages: second language acquisition, ("learner's system"), pidgin and creole, and the role played by the factors of linguistic change at each stage.

3.2 Contact: A cause of linguistic change

Language contact may be through political domination, trade, education or it may be the result of geographical proximity among other situations. The most important linguistic effect of such contact is linguistic borrowing or interference which may take place at any linguistic level. In his discussion of semantic change resulting from borrowings, W.P. Lehmann (1962, 1972:216) observes as follows:

> By far the most important effect on the semantic component of language is brought about by the influence of other languages or dialects, process referred to by linguists as borrowing. Borrowing may be viewed as cultural diffusion. In accounting for its effects, we must attempt to determine the conditions under which borrowing takes place.

For the theoretical distinction between borrowing and interference see W.F. Mackey (1970), E. Haugen (1950, 1956). The view I adopt here is that interference is an instance or an individual manifestation of borrowing with the possibility of becoming permanent, that is *langue-based* under specific socio-cultural conditions.

Interference is therefore seen here as a transitory or temporary *parole-based* phenomenon. As is well known linguistic borrowing is unidirectional or bidirectional depending on a number of factors such as the degree of cultural sophistication of the people speaking the languages in contact, the material or psychological needs of speakers of the borrowing language, etc. Lehmann (1972:219-222) identifies the following three situations of contact or types of relations between languages; borrowing occurs:

1) when a language of prestige is adopted;

2) when a language of prestige is used simultaneously with a surviving indigenous language;

3) when the languages concerned are on an equal plane.

Borrowing or interference is not confined to particular linguistic communities; it seems to be a universal linguistic phenomenon observed among fairly homogeneous speech communities as well as among heterogeneous linguistic communities. Charles Bruneau (1955:3) for example, has observed that:

> Our language is nothing more than Latin spoken by the Gauls, which has evolved through the centuries. It has been said that French is Latin 'prolonged' to a living state.

A. Lanly (1962:7) in his study on North African French, that is on the French used by Algerians, Tunisians, Spaniards and Italians in North Africa, has also remarked (cf. chapter 4 for a discussion of aspects of Lanly's work) that:

> North African French is a strange reminder of the provincial Latin of Gaul and the vulgar Latin of the Gauls.

Alcée Fortier (1884-85) who was concerned with the French language in America towards the end of the last century had also made the following observation:

> It is quite interesting to note how the ignorant and simple Africans have formed an idiom entirely by the sound and we can understand, by studying the transformation of French into the Negro dialect (i.e. Negro French dialect), the process by which Latin, spoken by the uncivilized Gauls, became our own French.

These quotations, particularly the latter, imply that there is a common process of linguistic transformation and that such a process may be fruitfully studied in situations of contact. This view has in fact been re-expressed by several scholars, though understandably in different terms. Consider here Rebecca Posner (1966:77) for example on the Romance languages (the underlining is mine):

> Comparison of the linguistic situation of the Roman Empire with the modern Americas or with Africa is most illuminating. In North America a linguistic hotch - potch is within a generation or two tidied out into a unified linguistic community, with survival of some minority groups: the pressures, cultural and social towards uniformity are extremely strong. In Latin America, uniformity is not so evident, in spite of the power of mass media and rapid communications:... In Africa, European languages, superposing hundreds of vernaculars, acquire, inspite of the forces of conservatism, a character of their own, and even their own peculiar African uniformity. Although the general, overall influence of the vernaculars is readily discernible, individual features cannot be regarded as confined to a certain area, or related to a particular vernacular.

3.3 French language contact situations: Pidginization and Creolization

As I have observed elsewhere (E.N. Kwofie, 1977:16-17, 1978:50-51) the French language is in contact in Africa with African languages in *four* situations:

(1) Where French serves as *official* (i.e. second) language but is spoken by a small proportion of the national population with the bulk having recourse to native languages in daily social inter course. An African language may be a national language or lingua franca.

(2) Where French is a foreign language, that is used in the educational system without its being an *official* national language; the latter function is filled by English.

(3) Where French is used along with sub-varieties of the same language in social settings where African languages cannot be used.

(4) Where French enjoys the same official status as English and still co-exists with African languages and sub-varieties of French.

Attempting a general world French-other language contact typology from an historical perspective the four situations proposed above may be combined into a single situation to produce the three main types that follow:

1. French has become a creole, or is becoming a creole and co-exists with an educated standard variety as is the case of the West Indies - Guyana, Haiti, etc. Mauritius, Louisiana, Quebec Province (- Montreal) etc.; superimposed upon this situation is English.

2. The French of the old French possessions is in contact with languages not belonging to the same genetic family (there is talk of the pidginisation and creolisation of French in certain areas of Africa).

3. The French of French descendants cut off from their ancestors for centuries as is the case of French Canadians for example. English may be one of the languages in contact with French.

There is, as may be easily observed, a feature that is common to the diverse settings: all the settings imply a degree of bilingualism or multilingualism. Now, bilingualism or multilingualism may be considered as a factor of language change since under certain conditions it may lead to pidginisation and/or creolisation which are generally considered as stages of linguistic evolution. The claim that pidginisation and creolisation are stages of the same process of linguistic change through contact is justified by numerous historical rather than typological definitions of *pidgin* and *creole* (I am of course aware of the hypothesis that there could be creolisation without pidginisation).

C.F. & F.M. Voegelin (1964:42-43) for example observe that:

> When many people speaking language A come into contact with many people speaking language B, they will, under the appropriate cultural conditions, mix A and B to create language C which is called a pidgin language (...); the only sure evidence that one is dealing with a pidgin creole language of the C type in the modern world is

> found when a known European language of the A or B type is the predominant donor of the vocabulary used by C speakers who contribute features of structure from other languages which can rarely be identified.

C.F. & F.M. Voegelin's hypothesis would seem to apply to any two languages in contact; however the emphasis is clearly placed on the *structural differences* of the languages in contact and on the *domains* where "hybridization" or "mixing" takes place. The *European language* contributes lexical elements while the other language, presumably a *non-European* language provides elements of structure.

It is significant to note that the process of creolisation has come to be restricted to contact between European and non-European languages rather than between two European languages (But see B. Schlieben-Lange (1977)). In his discussion of the possible origin of French-based creoles involving the "Pidgin Portuguese" and "Reflexification" hypotheses, H.G. Wittmann (1973:92-94) makes the following observations:

> The linguistic bases of the various Creoles, Ibero-Romance, French, English and probably Dutch, constitute a unique category. The evolutionary pattern of the Indo-European languages for the last two millennia show (sic) directional tendencies: a synthesis fall on the one hand and an agglutination rise on the other.
>
> ■■■■■
>
> The acceleration of the asynthesis characterizing the development of Gallo-Romance and Ibero-Romance from Latin reflects the creolizing effect inherent in language transplants. The same trend may be found in English. Geographical contact has caused this language to coalesce with Gallo-Romance, i.e. to become typologically Romance while remaining genetically Germanic. This may be true of Dutch.
>
> ■■■■■
>
> All modern Creoles are derived from languages of the Atlantic Sprachbund with their typological convergence accentuated to form in turn a Sprachbund. The divergence of this Creole Sprachbund with Swahili and typologically similar languages (such as most African languages and Malagasy) is increasing, whereas its deviation from Atlantic continues to explore the evolutionary tendencies already latent in Latin.

André Martinet (1960:165) also observes as follows:

> Creole languages represent synchronically a quite different phenomenon, since they are spoken to the exclusion of any other form of speech in all circumstances of life by compact groups of speakers. It may, of course, be assumed that, like pidgin or petit negre, they started as auxiliary languages but finally replaced the African languages in all circumstances in those regions, where, as in the West Indies, the slave trade brought together languages. Since creoles must have arisen as a result of contact between Africans, and since Europeans have always thought fit to use sabir in addressing Blacks, it will not be surprising to find in the structure of different creoles, whether they have English, French, Spanish, Dutch or Portuguese vocabulary, a large number of common features which remind one more of Africa than of Europe.

Apart from the resemblance it bears to C.F. & F.M. Voegelin's view for example, Martinet's opinion is also fairly representative of views expressed by various scholars on the genesis of creoles. (See particularly R. Chaudenson et al 1978).

A pidgin is generally considered as a contact vernacular, that is a medium of communication between persons who do not possess a common language, and none of whom speaks the language as a first language. A creole, on the other hand, is a pidgin that has become "nativised", that is the mother tongue of a community (cf. for example J. Berry, 1979, W.P. Lehmann, 1972:223 among others). The exact time span for the concretisation or development of a pidgin as a creole is however impossible to determine, it seems (see E.N. Kwofie, 1986b however).

I shall leave out of discussion the disputable territory covered by historical definitions of pidgin and creole, namely the *transition* problem (see in this regard M.C. Alleyne, 1971, I.F. Hancock, 1971 and D. Decamp, 1971).

As a contact vernacular, a pidgin is considered to possess a limited vocabulary, fewer grammatical devices in comparison with the language (or languages) to which it may be traced; it is further characterized by a drastic reduction of redundant features; notice that redundancy is held to be a characteristic of natural human languages. Consequently, it seems that it is the "upper language" that undergoes the *reduction* or *simplification* of features. As Alleyne (1971) has observed the simplification of a language may be "purposeful" or "accidental".

The process by which a pidgin results is generally described as *simplification*. Simplification may take place in a contact situation involving two languages of equal prestige such as English and Scandinavian between the ninth and eleventh centuries. It would appear that the significant point in talking of simplification is the degree to which the process is carried by speakers of the language in question; Lehmann (1972:223) writes:

> - Still further simplification is evident when speakers communicate only on simple cultural levels. A readily attested example may be found in baby-talk. Speakers, in using it, may avoid lexical items that border on the grammatical, such as pronouns: baby like candy? In even less unabashed utterances, such as baby go seepee, we find phonological as well as morphological simplification. Such simplification, used not only to infants when attempting to convey affection, is very similar to that found in the so-called Pidgin languages or Creolized languages.

The notion of simplicity or simplification has generally not been rigorously defined in the literature (see however Alleyne, 1971, W.J. Samarin, 1971 and P. Mühlhausler, 1974). In Mühlhausler's view (1974:136) simplification is one of the universal features of any language transmission. Consequently, the term seems inappropriate because it implies "that simplicity is dynamic". According to him (1974:68):

> Pidgins are not just simplest languages but vary in their degree of simplification from speaker to speaker and from pidgin to pidgin. The tendencies of simplification and complication are continuously present and the pressure of communication may trigger off simplification of varying degrees.

However that may be, taking the term in its broad sense, simplification operates from the standpoint of the structures of languages in contact to reduce the linguistic distance between the language involved in the contact situation; in other words, a pidgin is considered to show less differentiation in phonology, grammar and vocabulary with respect to the other language (or languages) from which it is deemed to have been derived.

The following presentation by Dell Hymes (1971:43) of "Tay Boi: The Pidgin French of Vietnam" described by J.E. Reinecke (1971) exemplifies the generally held view:

> Here is a variety of speech whose vocabulary is mostly from one language, its sentence structures often from another, and yet distinct from both; restricted in vocabulary and structure, variable in pronunciation; restricted in function and used by a community for none of whose members it is a first language. (...) Its lexicon is almost wholly from the dominant language (French); morphology almost does not exist; syntax shows some carry-over from the indigenous language (Vietnamese), and a good deal may be due to neither, having emerged in the language's own development. Phonetics have been essentially those of a user's primary language (French or Vietnamese).

From the characterisations of pidgin and creole it can be inferred that the main condition for the cristallisation of a pidgin is multilingualism. Since African countries are ostensibly multilingual, one can legitimately say that with the adoption of French, a European language as a means of communication by both educated and "ignorant" Africans (see Fortier above), the main condition for the process of pidginisation would seem to be satisfied. But there is an important difference between the African language contact situations and those contact situations generally referred to by French linguistic historians and creolists: communities in Africa are obviously linguistically 'balkanised'; they do not however face the overriding need to adopt the historically imposed foreign language, French, for purposes of intercommunication in preference to their indigenous languages, that characterized the transplanted captives of the slave trade era; the factor of brutal cultural change implied by the massive "human transplantation and implantation" is completely absent, even though there have been intense population movements in West Africa over the past few decades. There is also the role played by formal education in stemming the tide of pidginisation. However, it is believed by some that what could eventually become pidgin French and consequently creole French exists in some African countries. In fact, some have pointed to the existence of "pidgin French" on the West African coast even if unlike Pidgin English it is much more restricted in use. (see P. Alexandre, 1967:91 for example).

According to L. Duponchel (1974), the types of French employed by some Africans, more specifically Ivorians "gradually shade into" African languages: "il n'y a pas des énoncés français face à des énoncés en langue négro - africaine mais on passe progressivement des uns aux autres". Put somewhat differently, the varieties of French used in Africa are affected by African linguistic features depending on the level of education of speakers; there is what may be described then as "code-switching", "mixed languages" among others.

J.P. Vonrospach had observed in 1968 the existence in the Ivory Coast of a variety of French with its own phonological, grammatical and lexical systems (see below for a sketch).

Similar observations were made on Central African French by L. Bouquiaux about the same time (see below). Consequently, what has been said of certain varieties of French: pidgins and creoles, outside the African continent may be seen to apply to the varieties observed by Bouquiaux, Duponchel and Vonrospach; namely that the phonetics of African varieties of French are essentially those of users' primary languages, that syntax shows some carry-over from indigenous languages, but that while the lexicon is almost wholly French, its size is drastically reduced. The general impression is that several of the varieties of French used in Africa are "drastically simplified".

In 1969, Luc Bouquiaux had observed that "with the exception of a small elite which studied in France and had (consequently) acquired a better knowledge of French, the bulk of the population of the Central African Republic making use of French really possesses a language not far removed from Sango with a basic vocabulary, syntax that is a close copy of Sango syntax and a rudimentary morphology. Knowledge of French is limited to the acquisition of a certain vocabulary with an extremely vast semantic field and often in interference from one term to the next".

Even among the educated elite, Bouquiaux observed, that there was confusion not only of style levels but also of distinctive sounds; here, however, the frequency of phonological confusion was not as high as it was among other speakers, perhaps the less well-educated.

The salient features of the French spoken by Sango subjects, in the light of Bouquiaux's observation, would seem to be the following:

(a) limited vocabulary with as a consequence semantic extension and confusion of style levels;

(b) morphological levelling, simplification or reduction of grammatical distinctions;

(c) transposition of substratum syntactic structures, Sango being the substrat.

Of the phonetic and phonological particularities of this type of French, Bouquiaux lists the following:

i. *mute e* [ə] becomes ɛ̲, e̲ and a̲ which he exemplifies partially with the following transcriptions:

forgeron /fɔrzèrɔ̃̄ɔ̃̄/
premier /prèmyēè/
semaine /sèmēɛ̀n/
ressort /làsɔ̄ɔ̀r/

ii. y becomes i in words like *bureau, foutu*, etc.

Thus byro > biro; futy > futi

iii. œ becomes ɛ as in *jeunesse* /

/zɛnɛɛsɛ/

In his paper: "Le français populaire d'Abidjan" presented at the Eighth West African Languages Congress at Abidjan in 1968, J.P. Vonrospach had noted that the type of French he described as "popular" exhibited the following features among others:

1. ø becomes e
2. œ becomes ɛ
3. mute e [ə] becomes, ɛ or e
4. l and y become u
5. y becomes i
6. ʃ becomes s

Some of the morphosyntactic and lexical features of the popular French of Abidjan are:

(a) the attribution of masculine gender to nouns, exceptions being the most commonly used nouns whose gender is known; the system of determiners is reduced to the element / la / which occurs postponed to the noun,

(b) normal Standard French word order is inverted. Thus Subject + Pronoun Direct Object + Verb ----> Subject + Verb + Pronoun Direct Object. Vonrospach exemplifies these features with sequences like

(i) / ʃ prã mobilet la / - *il prend mobylette-la*
(ii) / ɔ m la i / - *l'homme la, il...*
(iii) / ze vi lyi / - *j'ai vu lui* for *je l'ai vu*
(iv) / i vm atrape twa / - *ils vont attraper toi* for *ils vont t'attraper*

(c) Semantic extension or synonymic confusion e.g.

le compteur for *le taxi* (*compteur* being the taxi fare calculator!) *quitter* for *s'en aller* or *partir* (leave) *poser* for *s'asseoir* (sit down).

What is interesting to note is the recurrence elsewhere (cf. E.N. Kwofie, 1977b) of some of the phenomena independently observed by Bouquiaux (see above).

Although many of the observed morphosyntactic and lexical uses are contrary to the standard French norm, they seem to be "perfectly comprehensible" within their "popular" contexts. The order or position of the object pronouns *lui* and *toi* in examples b(iii) and b(iv) respectively is unacceptable in standard French; but it is normal in vernacular or colloquial French. It is conceivable that the native languages of speakers of this type of Ivorian popular French are responsible for the observed "deviant" structures. And yet utterances comparable to those recorded above are known to be frequently produced by English-speaking West Africans (Nigerian and Ghanaian secondary students and even second year Nigerian University under-graduates). Consider the following examples:

1) *mes amis rendu visites moi* instead of *mes amis m'ont rendu visite* literally: 'my friends paid visits me' (in English).

2) *maman a aidé nous* instead of *maman nous a aidés* literally: 'mum has helped us'.

It will be observed that whereas the English translation of 1) is ungrammatical and *unacceptable*, that of 2) is *normal*.

Unless the Ivorian subjects producing observed structures like those above can be shown to possess a knowledge of English, in which case the "interference" could be attributed to English, the obvious conclusion to be drawn from the identity or comparability of the structures by English speaking and French speaking subjects is that the African languages spoken by subjects are structurally similar and are the undisputed cause of the "deviations"; or else that English and African languages are so similar in this particular area of usage as to lead to identical "deviations" in different physical environments.

Without going into great grammatical details however we may observe that the position or order of the *object pronoun*: *lui* or *toi* paralleled by *moi* and *nous* is a mode of emphasis necessitated, it seems, by the "accidental" deletion (= simplification of structures?) on the surface of the preceding direct object pronoun *le* or *te* which appears in standard French.

How far the phenomenon of linguistic interference leading to such simplification (or is it complication?) brings the variety of French in question nearer to pidgin, popular or creole French is a line of investigation worth pursuing. For the present, however, we leave the question open.

It has been observed above that language change entails the simplification of an accent, a sound, a grammatical element, a word or a locution, and that such simplification may be due to interference, which is a result of language contact.

A comparison of the phonetic characteristics identified by both Bouquiaux and Vonrospach shows the absence of the feature of "lip rounding" as a factor in what Bouquiaux calls the "creolisation" of French by Sango, and the "popular character" of the French spoken by Ivorians. The isolation of the feature of "lip rounding" is based on the definition of the phoneme as a bundle of distinctive features and leads to the idea of phonetic/phonological simplification. Simplification may be "purposeful" or "accidental". As M.C. Alleyne (1971) has rightly observed: "speakers of one language may simplify their language and supplement it by recourse to other communication media (signs especially); while speakers of the lower language in their clumsy attempts to speak the 'upper' language may so interpret it, either through the medium of their own native language or through simple inaccurate reproduction that the results do appear to be simplification of the 'upper' language."

In "Acculturation and the Cultural Matrix of Creolisation", a paper presented at the Mona Conference on Pidginisation and Creolisation of Language (April 1968), Alleyne recorded the following forms as existing in French-based 'creoles' everywhere:

> *vle* for *voulez*, *pe* for *peut*, *met* for *mettre mete* for *mettez*, *ped* for *perdre*, *pedi* for *perdu*, *konet* for *connaître*.

Some of these forms exemplify consonant cluster simplification of the type cr > c; rc > c. Generalising from this rather limited corpus, one may say that the element r is among those consonants frequently elided. Other types of consonant cluster simplification have been recorded by E. Jourdain (1956:9-10) for creole: e.g. kt > t, st > t, nd > n (see below for African examples). What I describe as "phonological simplification" or "simplification of complexes of distinctive features" referred to earlier is also exemplified by the substitution of i for y (see examples from Bouquiaux and Vonrospach).

Since it is generally believed that French-based creoles have resulted from contact between French and African languages (cf. M.F. Goodman, 1964, W.B. Lockwood, 1972 among several others), simplification of consonant clusters, etc. may be considered either as a carry-over from African language structure or as a general human tendency in language learning situations or use of language. Simplification, as is well known, is not restricted to French-based creoles; it has been observed in numerous languages including English-based creoles and non-creoles (cf. W. Labov, 1972:216-224), and among people from different ethnic backgrounds. It is incontestably a universal feature of language transmission.

A comparison of some of the data on creole languages, pidgins and on second language learning or acquisition seems to suggest that some of the phenomena observed can be described in two main ways: 1) some phenomena are *typological* 2) others are due to *ethnic speech habits*. Under 1) *typology*, speakers of genetically unrelated languages may exhibit the same features in their use of a language due to a) certain physiological processes involved in language use being universals as for example, consonant cluster simplification of simplification of structures generally, laxness of articulation, these being effects presumably of a natural human tendency towards "the economy of effort" or b) structural parallels among languages not necessarily related genetically. Under 2) *ethnic speech habits* are subsumed all phenomena manifestly seen to be referable to a given linguistic group or given speech groups that are historically related.

Such substitutions as i̲ for y̲, e̲ for ø̲, ɛ̲ for œ̲ observed among Wolof-speakers of French in Senegal (cf. M. Calvet 1964/5), Akan-speakers of French in Ghana and Ivory Coast (cf. E.N. Kwofie, 1966 and 1978, and B.M. Haggis, 1973), Sango-speakers of French in Central African Republic (cf.

Bouquiaux, 1969 supra), among Italian, Spanish and Arabic-Speakers of French (cf. A. Lanly, 1962; for Arabic speakers see also P. Van Den Heuvel, 1967) may be considered as *typological* rather than as due to "ethnic factors". Note here that the languages involved in these contact (or second language learning) situations bear no strict genetic relationship one to another; for, whereas Arabic belongs to the *Afro-Asiatic* linguistic family, Italian and Spanish, as is well known, are *Romance* languages; while Akan (implying here Nzema, Fante, Twi, Baule and Agni) belongs to the *Kwa* linguistic family, Wolof to *West-Atlantic*, Sango belongs to *Eastern-Adamawa* (cf. J.H. Greenberg, 1966:6-9, 42-52).

The same phenomenon may however result from typological as well as ethnic causes; and this is where problems of interpretation often arise.

I have observed a general tendency to simplify consonant clusters among Akan-speaking subjects; the reduction occurs in all positions: initial after the first element of the group; medial and final. In final position, the reduction affects either a single consonant or the whole cluster.

Thus *professeur* is pronounced as *p-ofesseu* - i.e. pr > p
descendre is pronounced as *desan* - i.e. -dr > zero
peuple is pronounced as *peup* - i.e. - pl > -p-
pourquoi is pronounced as *pukwa* i.e. -rkw > -kw
pour is pronounced as *pou* - i.e. -r > zero
excuser is pronounced as *esuser* i.e. -ksk > -s-
parti is pronounced as *pa-ti* i.e. - rt > t.

Consonant cluster reduction is in fact widespread and varied. The following consonant groups are those frequently reduced.

(i) consonant + r/l as for example pr, tr, fr. pl

(ii) ks, kt, sk, gz, (e.g. ɛgzãpl > ɛzãp) vw (vwala > wala)

(iii) r + two other consonants as in *arbre*

(iv) a combination of (i) and (ii) where permitted in French as in *exprimer* (ɛksprime) is usually reduced to three (= ɛsprime).

Tied up with the reduction of clusters is the general tendency to elide / r / from sequences in all but initial position, a feature that I have identified in the creole examples proposed by Alleyne above.

It is possible to explain these types of consonant cluster reduction in two ways:

(1) simplification takes place because the African languages spoken by subjects do not have comparable consonant clusters and subjects find such clusters difficult or impossible to pronounce. W.E. Welmers (1973:53) notes that consonant clusters are generally rare in Niger-Congo while they are common in Afro-Asiatic: Wolof and Akan are Niger-Congo languages;

(2) consonant cluster simplification is a "popular" tendency and is not necessarily limited to Akan and Wolof which are Niger-Congo languages: the justification here is that comparable instances of consonant cluster reduction have been observed among Frenchmen speaking "popular French". In this variety of French *coudre, quatre, mettre, peuple, sable* and *pos-*

sible are pronounced respectively as *coud, quat, met, peup, sab* and *posib* (cf. P. Guiraud, 1969:100-108 and A. Sauvageot, 1972:49). The same phenomenon has been observed in French-creoles (cf. E. Jourdain, 1956:9-10). It may be pointed out here however that in popular French the reduction occurs mainly wordfinally or in wordfinal position as the examples show. There is thus some difference in the direction of reduction.

While some phenomena like consonant cluster simplification are not easily assignable to a cause, others can be explained without much difficulty. This is the case of palatalisation, labialisation and affrication of certain French sounds by Akan-speakers in West Africa. Consonants are generally more labialised or palatalised according to the nature of the vowels which occur after them. This is normal in combinatory phonetics. What is considered here as labialisation and palatalisation is the perception of a distinct [w] - sound and [j] - sound respectively after a consonant and before the vowel. Affrication applies to plosive consonants pronounced with a distinctive fricative sound.

In the speech forms examined, k̲ is the only consonant labialised in the environment of æ and ə; l̲, s̲ and t̲ are palatalised before y̲; t̲ and d̲ are generally affricated in environment i̲, e̲ and zero. Thus words like *aucun, habitude, accuse, mesure, cuit* and *naturellement* are pronounced respectively as [okwæ̃], [abitjid], [at͡syz], [məzji:r], [t͡swi] and [naːɪːIrɛlmæ̃].

Similar examples observed by Alcee Fortier in "Negro French" in Louisiana a century ago are

coeur pronounced as tchor (tch = ts?) and
Dieu pronounced as dje (dj = ?)

E. Jourdain (1956:11) also observes that creole-speakers tend to palatalise certain consonants in the environment of é è i oé oè u. Thus for example *paquet* and *croquet* are realised respectively as *pakje* and *krokje* (the notation is mine). Since there is no indication in standard works on French phonology that such features occur in modern French (palatalisation is however held to be a feature of Celtic pronunciation responsible for certain vowel changes in the early history of French: see here A. Martinet, 1975:39-73 but compare also R.D. King, 1969:171-175 on other languages), and since West African languages are considered to have contributed features to the creole French of the West Indies, the feature of palatalisation would logically seem to be a West African influence.

3.4 Conclusion: Do Pidgin and Creole French exist in Africa?

The French spoken by Africans shares some features with other varieties of French like vernacular French and creole French. However, whereas such features are permanent or stable in creole French, the same cannot be said of the varieties of French used by Africans. The types of French described as "popular" by Vonrospach and as "creolised" by Bouquiaux are probably widespread and established as permanent independent vehicles of communication (cf. J. Roggero, 1970), but their stability and expansion need to be clearly defined (see my programmatic statement in E.N. Kwofie, 1978:14). Until their currency and stability have been determined, such speech events as those recorded cannot be properly considered as indicators of the existence of pidgin French or Negro-French in Africa. A comparison of such events with others recorded for other settings would seem to suggest that certain identifiable features are normal in language learning, bilingual or multilingual situations; the features tagged "popular" or "creole" may even disappear or turn out, with the lapse of time, to be transitory as long as they are not reinforced either as a result of the influence of educational institutions, the extension of educational facilities to rural communities, or pressures of the speech community at large (see E.N. Kwofie, *Varieties of French in West Africa: Form and Function*, 1986b and 1986c).

PART THREE

METHODOLOGICAL ASPECTS

CHAPTER 4

THE DESCRIPTION OF FRENCH LANGUAGE CONTACT IN AFRICA: THE NORTH AFRICAN EXAMPLE EXAMINED IN ITS RELEVANCE TO WEST AFRICA

4.1 Methodological Preliminaries

Until the country's attainment of independence in 1962 and the mass exodus of the French shortly before then and after, Algeria was considered as an integral part of France. Franco-North African relations began with the capture of Algeria's capital city, Algiers, by French troops in 1830. French political influence was, however, not extended to other North African countries until half a century later. Tunisia became a French protectorate in 1884 and Morocco followed in 1911. The establishment of French influence in North Africa and the subsequent use of French as a means of communication and administration vis-a-vis the linguistic diversity of that region are factors that bring North Africa like French-speaking West Africa and what used to be called French Equatorial Africa under the descriptive label "francophone". I propose in this chapter to examine the work that has been done on French language contact in North Africa from the standpoint of what useful inferences may be made for other French language settings in Africa and particularly for West Africa.

Not much linguistic knowledge seems to have been available about the type or types of French used in North Africa until 1962, except what may be considered as the "impressionism" of novelists, communicated symptomatically through a character called CAGAYOUS, and brief characterizations like those of Louis Brunot (1948) and D. Dupuy (1960). In 1948, L. Brunot had described North African French as "a language containing lexical and morphological elements borrowed from French, Spanish, Italian and Arabic (in the latter case either directly or indirectly via Maltese)" (the translation is mine).

The first easily available sketch is that provided by A. Lanly in "Notes sur le français parlé en Afrique du Nord" (1955).

Three years before Lanly provided his "Notes" R. Mauny who was then in West Africa, had in his *Glossaire* (1952:7) written about the French used by educated Africans in French speaking West Africa in the following terms:

> The language used in French West Africa by Europeans and the African elite among themselves (although the African elite has preserved everywhere the use of the mother tongue) is French. It is neither a patois like the "Cagayous" of Algeria nor a creole language deforming more or less the speech of the metropolis like the French of the West Indies.

Educated francophone West Africans do indeed use a variety of French which is identifiable with standard French at least in their intercourse with French-speaking Europeans and other educated French speaking Africans. This observation does not however represent the whole linguistic situation.

Mauny's observation is particularly interesting as French may be considered to have been introduced into West Africa, more precisely into Senegal at least a decade earlier than was the case in North Africa: notice that the first French primary school was opened at Saint-Louis in 1816 (Saint-Louis had been selected for settlement as early as the middle of the 17th century). The first primary school for the Ivory Coast, another Francophone West African country, was established by a French-

man at Elima in 1897. Continuous occupation by the French of the latter country dates from 1882, that is, just about the time Tunisia became a protectorate of France. The Ivory Coast became a French colony effectively in 1893, thus about a decade before Morocco became a French protectorate. From a purely chronological standpoint then French seems to have been used at least half a century in Senegal or in parts of Senegal before it was formally introduced into the Ivory Coast. Leaving aside these obvious differences and the possible linguistic consequences for Senegal and the Ivory Coast on the one hand and for Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia on the other; and also ignoring the possible role of geographical proximity, the influence of travellers and traders in the diffusion of French, one may want to identify the factors that must have intervened to change the character of the French used in North Africa, but leave "unscathed" the French spoken in francophone West Africa; in other words, it would be of interest to identify some of the characteristics of "Cagayous". I shall however do no more than present here in illustration the following short text culled from CAGAYOUS:64.

> Embrouilloun, tout ça qu'il a attrapé, c'est un petit saran de misère qui s'avait mouru de faim. Çuila-qu'il-a-la-calotte-jaune oui, y touchait bien. Ce fant de sa mère la, y s'a sorti une chiée de boguettes où y en avait qu'elles étaient pas vilaines, hein! Seurment (1) d'un peu de pluss y me lève un oeil vec son hameçon. Si ça serait pas été du mouchoir que je m'avais mis au cou ousqu'y s'est engantché le hameçon, y me sort l'eau de l'oeil. J'y ai foutu une pelotte de broumitche dans la figure, pour qui fait plus entention une autre fois.

For a long time the existence of an African variety, or varieties of French had been denied. This attitude, which was indeed a rejection of the fact that natural languages are subject to change like human groups, seems to have been encouraged by politics and perhaps by the lack of qualified and interested scholars. The first fairly comprehensive empirical study published on the French language in Africa is *Le Français d'Afrique du Nord: étude linguistique*, (1962) by A. Lanly.

Research carried out in various places: Dakar, Abidjan, Cameroon, Congo, North Africa, Zaire, etc. (see bibliography) does suggest the existence of "African varieties" of French. The important question that arises is whether these varieties of French can be regarded as "dialects" of French or as "transitional stages" in the acquisition of this language by people who speak languages that, in several cases, are unrelated to French; in other words, it would be nontrivial to determine; (i) how far such varieties are established as vehicles of communication and (ii) the extent of their use. The terms "pidgin" and "creole" have been applied to some of the African varieties of French. Are they justified?

Writing about a variety of French used in the Ivory Coast which he described as "popular" J.P. Vonrospach (1968) observed that its use is widespread and that it acts as a substitute for vernacular languages in certain social situations: "Comme il est également parlé par des intellectuels, dans certaines circonstances, il peut s'agir d'une langue "familière" et apparait alors comme un succédané des langues vernaculaires pour les situations sociales où celles-ci ne peuvent être employées". This variety has its own phonetic, morphological and lexical systems, according to J.P. Vonrospach.

I shall in a forthcoming study attempt to show that there are "levels of structure" that may be defined by specific criteria and that most of the features described as "popular" are identifiable with indigenous languages while others are not. It seems to be the case that we need a new framework for describing the rather complex linguistic situation in Africa.

An examination of the North African contribution to French language contact studies in Africa is proposed here with a view to suggesting directions of research. As a pioneering study on French in Africa *Le Français d'Afrique du Nord* exhibits greater caution than has become customary in subsequent research endeavours. Despite its apparent importance to French language contact research in

Africa, Lanly's study seems to have been neglected or is not mentioned in French language contact studies even where its influence seems obvious. Originally published in 1962 and reprinted in 1970, Lanly's book does not deserve the relative oblivion that seems to have become its fate among students of "overseas French" particularly outside North Africa. If Lanly's study is well know to some scholars that, in our view, is hardly sufficient justification for overlooking its contributions and claiming originality in the matter of research on French in Africa south of the Sahara.

A re-examination of Lanly's study considered as the North African contribution to the description of French language contact because of its near completeness and representativeness should help to reorient future as well as ongoing research. Moreover, a confrontation of the results of some of the research carried out since 1962 for other settings with those presented by Lanly for North Africa could help us to determine what features can be regarded as properly "North African" or "African". This frame of reference is justified by Lanly's historical and pedagogical perspectives. First of all, North African French is seen as "a strange reminder of the provincial Latin of Gaul and the vulgar Latin of the Gauls" (cf. p. 7 of the study in question; see the same quotation in chapter 3 of this work).

Secondly, *Le Français d'Afrique du Nord* is proposed as an inventory of "regional errors". It is also implied that a "dictionary of Algerianisms" could be derived from this study in the fashion of the Appendix Probi known to students of French historical linguistics. This view which appeared earlier in "Notes sur le français parlé en Afrique" is not different from that of searching for Belgianisms in Belgian French, Canadianisms in Canadian French, and Africanisms in African varieties of French in Zaire for example.

Lanly intended his study to be both descriptive and explanatory in so far as he not only describes phenomena but also attempts to determine the cause of such phenomena. This double perspective among others is certainly a good enough recommendation for the reexamination of Lanly's study here.

4.2 The sociolinguistic background of North African French

There were about 25 million inhabitants in Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia at the time Lanly wrote. 8.4% of this population were Europeans or non-Africans, and consisted of planters, technical assistants, government officials, unskilled labourers (i.e. manual workers), nurses, drivers, businessmen, children and housewives who had come to settle or been born in North Africa after 1830. Lanly's book purports to be a description of the French used by this non African population. The ethnic composition of this population is not always clearly specified as is the case, for example, for Tunisia's 250,000 resident Europeans. It is known, however, that the non-African population of North Africa was composed of Frenchmen (including Corsicans), comparatively the largest group, Portuguese, Italians, Spaniards, Jews and Maltese. The varied provenience and diverse social backgrounds of the various elements are undoubtedly factors which contributed to give North African French its "peculiar" character.

In view of this ethnic/linguistic diversity the following French contact situations may be identified:

1 - French and Arabic (Arabic is extensively spoken in North Africa and was ostensibly the first important language the first Frenchmen and other Europeans came into contact with).

2 - French (a variety described appropriately by Lanly as "Southern French") and Italian/Spanish.

3 - French, Italian and Spanish (where speakers use all three languages according to contexts and situations of course).

4 - French, Arabic and Italian/Spanish etc.

Except for the abstraction made of "minority" languages like Portuguese, Hebrew and Maltese (the latter being considered as a dialect of Arabic (cf. D. Cohen, 1970) Lanly's study embraces all these types of contact situations. It is unfortunate, however, that the author did not pay greater attention to the indigenous non-European populations. One is for this reason not in a position to undertake a direct comparison of the types of French used by Europeans and non-Europeans in North Africa. There is no doubt that such a comparison would have been of considerable theoretical interest. Such a comparison may nonetheless be attempted indirectly by confronting Lanly's findings with those that apply specifically to Africans in other areas of Africa.

Lanly's description of North African French is based mainly on written texts: novels, newspapers and "parodies". Any corpus constituted in this way may be valid for a grammatical analysis but its validity for phonological analysis is seriously reduced. However, the author supplemented these sources with casual oral interviews and what he calls "personal experience". The number of informants is not specified; nor are their social class, the contextual and geographical origin of linguistic expressions consistently indicated.

Linguistic competence in a foreign language is usually the result of education. But competence may also be acquired under other conditions broadly classifiable as economic, religious or social. The conditions under which a language is acquired or learned may determine to some extent the kind of competence attained. The parallel study of the use of French by the various social categories and the conditions under which the language was acquired and is used would have been of great interest. Lanly did not unfortunately consider these important variables in his description of North African French.

4.3 Some characteristics of North African French: Aspects of the phonology and syntax

The material of Lanly's study is organised under six headings which I translate as follows: 'Vocabulary' (35-206) and 'Syntax' (208-251): constitute Part 1 of the study. Part 2 (255-267) 'The Deformation of French' describes the changes that have occurred as a result of contact. It is more a treatment of syntax and the section in my view could have been made a subsection of Part 3 'Dialectal Innovations' (277-308) which deals with what Lanly considers to be characteristic of North African French. An Introduction (9-31) provides an historical survey of North Africa and sets forth the author's aims and method of research. There is a Conclusion (323-340) and a Bibliography (341-349) which is arranged in three sections; the second section of the bibliography by far the longest, lists studies on French grammar, history of the language and its dialects. The entries for Portuguese and Maltese (the latter is listed separately from Arabic) are scanty and seem to reflect the peripheral status accorded these languages in the study. The Phonology is briefly discussed in nine pages (312-320). Generally then the vocabulary is given greater prominence over the syntax although in the author's own words the latter offers a more interesting study.

The number of words borrowed from Arabic is estimated at 300. This estimate seems rather high and must be the cumulative loan vocabulary from Arabic culture as a whole since the Middle Ages rather than from North African Arabic in particular (cf. P. Guiraud, 1971:9-19). This loan vocabulary is considered under various headings like "clothing", "swear words", "vulgar words", "fauna and flora". One is of course not surprised that loan items should belong to precisely such categories granted that

North Africa and France have different cultures, topography, etc. This part of Lanly's study will be examined along with aspects of the vocabulary of other varieties of French in another essay and will therefore not receive further treatment here.

I shall concentrate the discussion henceforth on the phonology and aspects of the syntax.

4.3.1 Phonology and phonetics

Under "Notes sur la prononciation" Lanly observed that mute e is lengthened and has a timbre not unlike that of œ (= [ø]). Thus *retraite* is pronounced as [retret] "almost like [rǫetrẹt]" (ẹ is Lanly's symbol for mute e).

Now, it is known that there is considerable overlap in normal spoken French of the three related sounds /ø/ /œ/ and /ə/ (cf. E.N. Kwofie, 1978). In fact, most speakers use and perceive only two sounds. At any rate, most phonologists would represent the sound heard in precisely those environments where /ø/ or /œ/ and /ə/ do not contrast as /ø/ or /œ/. What seems interesting is the fact that in certain cases /œ/ is pronounced as [ẹ] in *dejeuner*, a feature that may be due to laxness of articulation?, and /œ/ or /ø/ is pronounced as /e/ (i.e. as e) in *veux* etc. and as /ü/ in *jeune* which may be an instance of spelling pronunciation. With more data it would perhaps be easier to confirm the existence of the confusion /ø/ /œ/ - /ə/ and thereby indirectly support the assertion in certain quarters that the pronunciation of mute e is a feature of "provincial" or "archaic" varieties of French in contrast to the normal spoken French of Paris and environs.

The occurrence of [ø] as [e] in *veux* on the other hand perhaps only demonstrates the nondistinctiveness of *lip rounding* as a factor for front vowels in Provencal, Italian or Spanish. This same feature has however been observed for West African speakers who have no knowledge of Provencal, Italian or Spanish (see E.N. Kwofie, 1978:63-64). One may therefore speak of "convergence" here.

Among the influences Arabic is said to exert on French is the replacement of [i] by [e]. Thus *dis* and *Monoprix*, among others, are pronounced with a vowel intermediate between [i] and [e] or pronounced as [ẹ]. Since spoken Arabic possesses both the vowels [i] and [e] it seems surprising that such a substitution should be made. To explain this phenomenon, as Lanly should have done, the distribution of [i], [e] and [ẹ] in Arabic must be considered. It is possible in a study of language contact to offer several competing explanations for the same phenomenon. I have not been able to explain, independently of Lanly, why [i] is pronounced as [e].

According to Al-Ani (1970) Arabic /i/ has an allophone [I] which occurs in the vicinity or pharyngealized consonants; /i/ occurs elsewhere. On the other hand, no /e/ is mentioned for Arabic. If [i] occurs in North African Arabic in open syllable as it does in Contemporary Standard Arabic as described by Al-Ani then the replacement of [i] by [e] remains unexplained.

Lanly observes further that the sound [ʌ] of the English loan word *bluff* is pronounced as [ǫ] (i.e. [ɔ] as a result of Provencal, Italian and Spanish identification.

The fact that *bluff* is a borrowed item is an adequate enough reason for this "peculiar" pronunciation among several possibilities not attested by Lanly. The correctness of the pronunciation of a loan word depends not only on the speaker's experience of the donor language but also on the degree of integration of the loan. It is my belief, and this belief is sustained by the treatment of English loan words in French, that unless the volume of words borrowed at any particular time is high and words constitute correlative sets or form a series in some significant phonological sense, the way they are pronounced would be random and of marginal importance in a consistent phonological description. Borrowed words have, after all, to be modified according to the sound system to which the speakers are used (cf. W.F. Mackey, 1962, L. Deroy, 1956, P. Guiraud, 1971).

As for the confusion of [ã] with [õ] as well as that of [ɛ̃] with [œ̃] it is known that there is an ever-increasing tendency among Frenchmen to produce and perceive three instead of four nasal vowels. The contrast /ɛ̃/ - /œ̃/ is unstable and of low functional yield (cf. chapter 3) while the reverse is the case for /ã/ - /õ/. The confusion of these contrasts by North African speakers is explained in terms of the absence of such oppositions in the Romance languages represented and in Arabic. The confusion of [œ̃] with [õ] is more specifically identified with Arabic. This confusion has also been observed for West African speakers. If some North African Arabic speakers say *on voyou* instead of *un voyou*, *on* homme is also frequently heard from West African French speakers from different linguistic backgrounds. If one remembers that [o] differs from [ɔ] only by the retraction of the tongue toward the pharyngeal wall the confusion can be easily explained (cf. P. Delattre, 1965). It may be possible in the future with the accumulation of relevant data to describe such confusions as *typological* (see the next chapter for considerations on the relevance of linguistic typology to language contact studies).

Apart from the palatalization of /s/ and /z/ which is restricted to Algiers the only other feature that is widespread and hence of interest is the reduction of consonant clusters.

Lanly records that *donne-moi* is pronounced as [domwa]; in other words, the sequence [nm] is reduced to [m]; *direct* is pronounced as [direk]; that is the group [kt] is reduced to [k] and the group [tn] in *maintenant* is reduced to [n]; thus *maintenant* is pronounced as [mɛ̃nɑ̃].

Although the phenomenon of consonant reduction assumes several forms the instances observed in West Africa parallel those cited by Lanly. Consider the following examples (among several others in E.N. Kwofie, 1978).

architecte [kt] becomes [k]
excuser [ksk] becomes [s]

One must see in such occurrences a general "popular" tendency, a tendency toward economy of effort; [direk], [domwa] and [mɛ̃nɑ̃] are in fact found in vernacular or popular French in France (cf. P. Guiraud, 1968).

Lanly obviously relegated to the background the task of describing the phonology of North African French, and does not, by the paucity of his data, allow an attempt at reconstruction of the "accent" of North Africa. He points out (p. 316) that the most important feature of the "Algerian", rather than North African accent, is the alternation of short, long and diphthongized vowels; this feature will naturally be explained in terms of the sound system of Arabic. And yet Schoell (1936:181) had observed that North African urban French

> frappe le Parisien par l'accent à la fois méridional et guttural qui lui est imprimé,
>
> (strikes the Parisian by its accent which is distinctly southern French and guttural,)

an observation which suggests a double origin of the North African French accent. In the absence of a more precise characterization however, it would be unwise to indulge in further theorizing.

Lanly does not unfortunately determine the cumulative effect of these phenomena on intercomprehension or intelligibility between North Africans. It is useful in bilingual descriptions to distinguish between speech phenomena which have only "phonetic" effects and those which have "phonological" effects. For all speech phenomena do not have the same influence on comprehension. Thus for example in the West African context while laxness of articulation affecting both vowels and

consonants, denasalization and reduction of consonant clusters have been found to have phonological effects, spelling pronunciation, labialization, palatalization and affrication have only phonetic effects even though they may also contribute to lower intelligibility.

4.3.2 Syntax

On the grammatical level Lanly examines two areas which are of general interest. In this section, I will single out for comment elements of these two areas: "coordination and subordination" and the "use of tenses". Presenting data collected in the latter area, Lanly makes the wise observation that: "il ne faut pas attribuer uniquement à l'influence de l'arabe cette imprécision du temps" (p. 211). Given the heterogeneity of North African populations it seems judicious to recognise several possible sources of interference; one cannot be too cautious in proposing explanations for observed phenomena especially as variables are numerous in multilingual situations. There is need for detailed studies of such variables. Since such studies are often lacking, explanations which presuppose them must remain tentative. Lanly does not unfortunately follow far enough the advice he himself offers.

The absence in Arabic of an element which is equivalent to the French *que* is taken to underlie deviant sentences like:

> "Dis, tu laisses je fais la polka avec ta soeur"
> (an example borrowed from Randau's Les Colons by Lanly)
>
> (Look you allow I do the polka with your sister)
>
> "La prochaine fois on le met en prison (votre fils) jamais plus il le fait"
>
> (The next time they put him (your son) in prison ever more he does it).

I have myself recorded in West Africa comparable sentences of which the following is an example:

> "Je ne crois pas j'aurai quelqu'un pour lui apprendre dans ma langue".
>
> (I don't think I shall have someone to teach (him) in my language).

The languages spoken by my informants (Akan) do possess an element that is equivalent to the French *que*: - /mɔ/ //bɔ// /nɔ/. This element is neither in free variation with another element nor optional in the sense that it can be omitted from sentences where it is required. My example cannot therefore be explained in terms of native language structure. This observation should perhaps make it less certain that the absence in Arabic of an element comparable to *que* in French necessarily underlies this particular difficulty.

Lanly's interpretation of this phenomenon is of course not unparalleled. Writing on French-Wolof contact in Senegal Maurice Calvet (1969) had observed that the presence of only one relative pronoun in Wolof compared with several in French coupled with its optionality in Wolof underlies the omission of the French equivalent in sentences like:

> "les chaises (...) sont assises les gens"
>
> (the chairs... are seated the people)

"les fils (...) on suspendait les lampes"

(the wires... one hanged the lamps).

Underdifferentiation in the entire pronominal system of Wolof is held to be responsible for a series of deviations:

> Ces différences structurales, le fait que les pronoms personnels wolof soient moins différenciés que ceux du français, sont la cause de toute une série de fautes que l'on trouve très fréquemment au Sénégal.
>
> (These structural differences, the fact that the personal pronouns of Wolof are less differentiated than those of French, are the cause of a whole set of errors frequently found in Senegal).

Differences between languages are not the only cause of interference as is widely supposed. Causes may be internal as well as external. I have suggested elsewhere (E.N. Kwofie, 1976) that confusion of elements may be due to greater frequency of occurrence of items in the target language and the degree of mastery of the total system. My suggestion was motivated by the fact that speakers of diverse languages that are not structurally related make the same substitutions; the level of education of speakers may also be a crucial factor.

The rather varied uses of *que* as substitute for *dont*, *auquel* and *qui* (pp. 227-229) recorded by Lanly are on the other hand attested in popular French (cf. here P. Guiraud, 1968) and may therefore be considered as merely indicative of incomplete mastery of the "relative pronoun" system of French.

Another feature regarded as North African because of its generality is the "nonstandard" use of the "conditional/future" exemplified by the following sentences:

"Si mon mari i' saurait (...) il serait pas content"

(If my husband he would know... he would not be pleased)

"Si j'aurai la moyenne demain je passe"

(If I shall obtain the average tomorrow I succeed)
(pp. 230-231).

Other uses are more specifically attributed to Spanish influence. Examples are the following:

"Si ça serait un homme i répondrait mais c'est pas un homme ça!"

(If that would be a man he would answer but that is not man that)

"Si j'aurais affaire à quelqu'un qu'il est pas honnête s'il aurait pas reconnu qu'il était dans son tort j'aurais déposé une plainte".

(If I would have something to do with someone who is not honest, if he would not have recognized that he was wrong I would have complained).

From a purely structural standpoint these sentences attributed to Spanish influence do not differ from sentences like the following produced by non-Spanish speaking West Africans:

"Si j'aurais des enfants je vais les nourrir avec cet argent".

(If I would have children I will feed them with that money).

Lanly however rightly relates such uses to "uneducated" French; indeed, such uses have been observed in both France and Belgium (cf. H. Renchon, 1967:161 ff); but the fact that Spanish does not possess any syntactic construction of the form SI + IMPERFECT but SI + a form in -ARA/-IERA is considered to be a contributing cause to the confusion.

4.4 Conclusion: The need to recall a seemingly obvious advice of a well known pioneer

Lanly demonstrates a good deal of perspicacity over a large portion of his study, in his attempt to unmesh a tangle of phenomena the origins of which are not always clear. His initial hypothesis unexpressed but clearly implied appears valid; namely, that in a situation like that described, the researcher is confronted with types of French other than standard French.

The important lesson that Lanly offers but which seems to have ignored, rather injudiciously, is that in all contact situations native as well as second languages of speakers may be contributory but not the only causative factors of interference; it is prudent to reckon with varieties of the foreign or target language. To define the varieties of any language involved in a contact situation as clearly or as unequivocally as possible one needs to identify or delimit social groups and observe their characteristic linguistic tendencies within defined contexts.

CHAPTER 5

THE NOTION OF LINGUISTIC INTERFERENCE AND THE DESCRIPTION OF FRENCH LANGUAGE CONTACT: A PROBLEM OF METHODOLOGY*

5.1 Introduction: The need for a broad view of French language contact in Africa

Scholars interested in language contact or bilingualism restrict their attention to the study of either its psychological, that is the emotional and intellectual effects on the individual or its purely linguistic effects; in other words, attention in the latter area is generally directed towards the description and measurement of linguistic interference. The psychological and linguistic effects of bilingualism or language contact are of course two legitimate areas of investigation. There is however another line of enquiry that seems to have attracted little or no attention at all: this is the search for or discovery of universals of bilingualism/multilingualism or general linguistic tendencies through the comparison of the various bilingual/multilingual, or generally speaking the language contact situations that obtain throughout the world.

An examination of some of the research findings that have accumulated in Africa and elsewhere on language contact (even though we have to do in this connection with a diversity of languages, situations and sometimes conflicting theoretical assumptions) suggests that comparative perspectives are likely to contribute to rather than hamper our understanding of language contact in particular and of language in general (cf. U. Weinreich, 1966:113). It is my view that linguistic typology and linguistic universals which represent two directions of linguistic enquiry offer useful additional insights into the nature of language and may help to shed some light on language contact and particularly on linguistic interference. I therefore propose to discuss briefly, in this chapter, the relevance of linguistic typology and linguistic universals to the study of linguistic interference which constitutes the focus of my concern here.

French language contact studies in Africa have so far had two main objectives: i) to determine from a purely descriptive stance, the main characteristics that set off the French spoken and written by Africans (or non-Africans) in Africa from other types of French; ii) to elaborate better methods of French language teaching on the basis of descriptive studies of "school" types of French used in Africa. The latter objective, expressed in different terms, seeks to identify interference phenomena from African languages in an attempt to help textbook writers to produce superior books by taking into account the particular difficulties of Africans, and in this way remove or minimize to the extent that this is possible the conditions likely to lead to the transformation or development of French as a "creole" (for both objectives see M. Calvet, 1969; P. Le Boulch, 1966; A. Lanly, 1962; Grelier, 1966/67; C. Hagège, 1968; J.P. Makouta-Mboukou, 1973; J. Champion 1974 for example).

If one can say that the idea of interference dates from the very first time when one may with propriety talk of "bilingualism", or that linguistic interference is as old as "talking man" (homo loquens), the study of interference has not attracted linguists as a means of determining the degree of vacillation and the speed at which one or more languages or dialects in contact evolve. The importance of the notion of interference in Africa, at least, stems principally from the fact that the

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*This chapter is based on two papers: i) "La notion d'interférence linguistique et la description du français en contact: réflexions sur un problème méthodologique", scheduled in 1976 to appear in West African Journal of Modern Languages, N° 4, but still unpublished and ii) "De la pertinence de la typologie et des universaux du langage à l'étude du contact des langues" presented at the 3rd International Colloquium on Functional Linguistics, Saint-Flour, France, June-July 1976 in Proceedings Sorbonne, 1980: 165-169.

foreign languages "interfered" with, play a great role in formal education and that the influences of African languages on them being such that they hamper the successful teaching of those languages and ultimately their acquisition. The incidence of the phenomenon needs to be controlled. J.P. Makouta-Mboukou, 1972 for example has observed that:

> Jamais l'Africain ne se dégage de l'influence maternelle. Il s'imagine parler le français. Il "entend", il "comprend" une odeur parce que dans sa langue, les notions de comprendre, de sentir, sont traduites par le même mot.
>
> (The African never rids himself of the influence of his mother tongue. He imagines he is speaking French. He "hears", he "understands" an odour because in his language the notions of understanding, of feeling, are translated by the same word.)

Most of the researches hitherto conducted on French in Africa however belong properly to the field of dialectology, if one considers that "African varieties of French" are "dialects" of the French language - a proto-language. Whatever their geographical origin or ethnic/linguistic background, African speakers of French are considered to share common linguistic features that seem peculiar to them. This would seem to be the general implication of the search for "africanisms" in the French used by Africans in Africa and even elsewhere such as the Caribbean where French is in a comparable situation. The search for africanisms in the French used by Africans also implies that this type of French is identifiable with French as used by some Frenchmen and other francophones; it denies implicitly that African varieties of French are different languages. Notice that dialectologists are concerned with describing language variation and hence with identifying linguistic communities that share linguistic features, even though the ultimate objective is the search for a model of language structure that can account for variation. Linguistic variation is best accounted for in terms of dialects.

Since no indigenous African population or social group uses French or a variety of it yet as a first language (cf. chapter 2), this must mean that French does not hold the same attraction for all African populations, that the importance of the language varies from one setting to another and from one individual to the next: notice that the choice of a particular language in a bilingual or multilingual setting is determined by emotional and psychological considerations among others (cf. U. Weinreich, 1966:77-78; A. Martinet, 1960:148-149. 1962:108 and J.A. Fishman, 1965). Consequently, one will find and indeed finds in Africa various types of bilinguals ranging from those who speak French and their African mother tongues with admirable ease and perfection to those who cannot speak either their native language or French "correctly" and who therefore represent the greatest foci interference.

Interference must be seen to be an important factor of "dialectalisation" in general (cf. chapter 3) as well as in the variation that may be noticed in the French language performances of Africans.

5.2 Linguistic interference and linguistic variety: problems of definition

The identification, description and measurement of interference between languages in contact is a problem of general linguistics. And yet linguists are not always agreed as to what constitutes interference; definitions crucially depend on linguists' conceptions of language, its nature and functions.

As was observed above (see chapter 1) however, linguists have generally and for a long time recognised language as a social institution; Ferdinand de Saussure (1968:25) defined language as:

> un produit social de la faculté du langage et un ensemble de conventions nécessaires adoptées par le corps social pour permettre l'exercice de cette faculté chez les individus.
>
> (a social product of the faculty of language and a sum of necessary conventions adopted by the social group for the use of that faculty by individuals).

Emphasizing the social character of language, Antoine Meillet (1928:3) went as far as to assert that "language does not depend for its modification on isolated individuals", while Eric Buyssens (1967:17) in his attempt to elaborate a system of semiology affirmed that "every act of communication constitutes a social relationship".

Granted then that language is a social institution, one would expect that it reflect the social stratification of the community in which it is used, or that the variability which it shows be related, to some extent, to the social structure of the speech community. Besides, one would expect individual linguistic differences to be mirrored in the use of language by individual members of the speech community since the linguistic development of any two members of a given speech community can never be identical. And yet until quite recently, linguists had generally tended, following Saussure's example, to consider language as homogeneous: "un système où tout se tient". The question of linguistic evolution was therefore not viewed by the majority of linguists in terms of the heterogeneity of language or in terms of co-existent systems. Linguistic differences observed within a given speech group were attributed generally to social or regional factors; if differences occurred between languages, whose speakers understand one another, linguistic or historical affinity or relationship was to be assumed. These sociological, geographical and historical dimensions were indeed recognised in dialectology or linguistic geography which was for a long time the "star" of linguistics. The emphasis was placed however on geographical and historical factors. A. Dauzat (1922:31) has written about linguistic geography in the following terms:

> Linguistic geography aims essentially to reconstruct the history of words, inflections, and syntactic groups based on the distribution of forms and actual types. Such distribution is not the result of chance; it is a function of the past, of geographical conditions and of the environment for which man is responsible.

At any rate, there has been for at least a decade a marked resurgence of interest in language as a *social institution*, with the increasing realization and acceptance of the fact that language does not and cannot exist independently of the individual. Linguists therefore now recognize more willingly and without much controversy *that linguistic difference within a speech community may first of all be defined sociologically*; thus for example, P. Guiraud (1969) observes:

> Social class is one of the important factors of linguistic differentiation. The mode of life, technical activity (and) the degree of cultural sophistication create types of speech peculiar to each milieu.

If the geographical dimension is still reckoned with, that is because individuals are distributed geographically. Consequently, all those linguistic features found in the speech of the individual which are explained in terms of his social class affiliation will be considered as sociological, while those features attributable to his geographical origin will be regarded as geographical. In both cases, the features concerned must be found also in the speech of other individuals seen to belong to the same

social class or region or locality. All other features not assignable to the two dimensions - sociological and geographical - would be explained in terms of individual psychology: education, etc. For as sociolinguistics teaches us there are no single-style speakers (cf. A. Sauvageot, 1969):

> ... lorsqu'un sujet français parle, il ne se sert pas d'un appareil homogène mais d'une pluralité d'appareils qui procèdent de principes différents. Ce "système" instable d'appareils distincts est utilisé pour assurer une communication qui peut être nuancée grâce à ces multiples ressources mais souvent ces procédés distincts structuralement n'expriment qu'une même pensée et sont pratiquement synonymes.
>
> (When a French subject speaks, he does not use only one homogeneous system but several based on different principles. This unstable "system" of distinct apparatuses is used to ensure a communication that can be altered thanks to these multiple resources, but often these structurally distinct processes express one and the same thought and are practically synonymous).

Linguistic variety is not confined to a single individual; whether educated or uneducated speakers of any language use varieties and variants of that language according to contexts and situations; and such diversity may be observed at all linguistic levels. That such diversity is not generally perceived or overtly acknowledged may be explained by the fact that individual divergences do not seem to affect intercomprehension, and that members of the same language group are generally well integrated linguistically speaking into their community. André Martinet (1960:149-150) has made the pertinent observation that follows:

> In reality absolute identity of systems seems to be the exception rather that the rule in intercourse between members of the same community. (...) Each person believes that he talks like everybody else, since they all 'speak the same language'. The identity of language, which the needs of the community require us to postulate, imposes itself on the minds of the speakers, makes them deaf to differences and inclines them to regard as a personal idiosyncracy any special linguistic feature (...) which happens to attract the attention of the hearer. (...) Thus a number of linguistic habits will appear to him, even if he does not himself use them, so normal and so usual that he will not feel them as differences. In other words, every person has his active linguistic norm, governing the use he makes of his language and also a passive norm which is much more lax and tolerant.

If in spite of the "identity of language" a monolingual hearer can observe divergences in the speech of a fellow monolingual or of two monolinguals who are members of his speech community, then it can be reasonably expected that divergences will be more easily identified in the speech of members of a completely different community who are forced by circumstances to use the hearer's language as a foreign language (cf. Bouquiaux's observations in chapter 3).

French and African or other language contact is generally known to be the result of colonisation, immigration, migration (i.e. population movements) or geographical proximity. However, the geographical and sociological conditions that have presided over the transplantation and use of French in various parts of the world are not identical. As was observed in a preceding chapter, French language contact may be viewed from three different angles. The problem of the description of interference between French and the diverse languages in contact with it will accordingly assume corresponding dimensions; namely:

1) that of French having become a creole as in the case of the Caribbean, Louisiana, Mauritius, etc.;

2) that of French of the old French possessions where African and other languages are extensively used and where such languages generally speaking bear no genetic of historical relationship to French;

3) that of French used by descendants of the French outside their original homeland - France - as in the case of Louisiana and Canada for example.

It will be noticed that: 1) differs from; 2) in the sense that a creole language serves as *the only vehicle of communication* for most members of given speech communities; besides, the creole language is an historically derived language whereas such is not the case in 2) where the languages in contact with French are not related in any way to French and cannot therefore be considered as derived from French or from French and some other language. All the three situations distinguished above involve bilingualism or multilingualism and accordingly entail varying degrees and types of interference.

Now, the notion of interference implies, first of all, that it is possible to keep dialects or varieties of language separate in all communication situations; it does not allow of "dialect mixture" while recognizing the coexistence of dialects or varieties of language or usage. It implies, secondly, that the extent of interference will vary from individual to individual depending on the individual's success or ability to keep his dialects or his languages separate. Interference may occur between different languages or dialects of the same language. However, the effect of interference seems to be more extensive where there is no historical or genetic relationship between the languages in contact.

According to W.F. Mackey (1962), "Interference is the use of features belonging to one language when speaking or writing another"; the use of features may take place on any linguistic plane - phonological, grammatical or lexical (cf. U. Weinreich, 1966:1), although the frequency of occurrence of the interference phenomenon seems to be higher on the phonological and lexical planes.

> The term interference implies the re-arrangement of patterns that result from the introduction of elements into the more highly structured domains of language, such as the bulk of the phonemic system, a large part of the morphology and syntax and some areas of the vocabulary.

Students of bilingualism agree that interference may be identified through the specification of the norm of each of the languages in contact (cf. E. Haugen, 1956; U. Weinreich, 1966 and W.F. Mackey, 1962 among several others). However, Mackey (1962) says further that interference may be identified through a process of elimination at all linguistic levels if the norm of only one of the languages in contact is known; this view, which simplifies the descriptive problem somewhat, has practical consequences for highly multilingual settings like those of Africa: it is rare for the linguist (in Africa) to have within his reach already specified norms for each bilingual situation. Consequently, the African linguist can operate with his knowledge of only *a norm*; the delicacy of his description is of course another matter not considered here.

> In each text, or sample of speech, we analyse the interference of only one of the languages with the predominant language or dialect. If the predominant language is French, we look for the elements which have not been integrated into the dialect.

Still following the recommendation of Mackey, interference as a *parole-based* phenomenon (cf. chapter 3) would apply only to those instances of deviation from the norm of the predominant language or dialect which have not as yet led to a permanent modification of the language or dialect. In other words, it is important in any bilingual description, to determine the degree of integration of each phenomenon identified as foreign to the norm of the predominant language. Thus one must distinguish between pidgins and creoles on the one hand and what for want of a better term may be described as "learners' systems" in foreign/second language acquisition on the other, even though, as has been remarked earlier (cf. chapter 3), the same mechanisms of interference are involved in these language contexts. It is as well to remember that language learning (whether it is a mother tongue or a foreign language that is involved) depends partly on analogy and generalisation. Since no human language is entirely regular in all its patterns or structures, one must recognise that irregularities of structure may also be generative of interference. Now, interference due to analogy and generalisation from structural irregularities within a language may be eliminated in a formal i.e. educational setting but may become permanent in other settings. Notice that most of the morphological levelling observed in the study of pidgins and creoles, and in the error analysis of the speech of foreign language learners for example is based on analogy from greater frequency of occurrence of certain features as compared with others; and that whereas such levelling tends to be reinforced in creoles and pidgins, it is generally eliminated in formal language learning situations. It is features such as the latter that help to distinguish various types of language situations and languages. Once instances of interference become permanent or generalised, that is "the property of a whole speech area" they may be deemed to have become integrated and hence part of the norm that may be identified for the language or variety of language in question. The degree of integration of any phenomenon may be determined by taking "availability tests", that is by finding out whether most or several other members of the speech community or given groups use the feature concerned (cf. W.F. Mackey, 1965).

The question of taking availability tests appears to be extremely complex in multilingual settings; and yet one cannot objectively characterise African varieties of French without determining the degree of permanence or integration and expansion of features that have been identified as "foreign" in individual realisations by Africans.

5.3 The problem of linguistic norm specification in the identification of African language interference in French

Since French like any other human language consists of varieties that are used in given contexts and situations and since there are no single style-speakers, the linguistic norm that may be recognised for the French language would in principle be all the features or usages found on the basis of statistical evaluations of collected data to be common to all native speakers of French using the language in a variety of contexts and situations. Differently expressed, the specification of the linguistic norm for French requires exhaustive or detailed mathematical calculations of all linguistic units for all dialects of French used by Frenchmen. This seems to be an impossible task. A possible solution then is to recognise and specify several norms for "homogeneous" groups identified according to sociolinguistic principles (cf. W. Labov, 1972). In the same order of ideas, one may identify the various norms that francophones in Africa possess by taking into account such factors as level of education, social group and level of language. This would seem to be necessary in view of the fact that an African speaker of French may know and use more than one variety of that language (cf. J.P. Vonrospach's (1968) observations for example on Ivorian speakers):

> African speakers make a clear distinction between the two "languages" (i.e. Metropolitan French and popular French). Intellectuals can speak both separately without making any "mistake" in any of them. Speakers who use only popular French know that they speak "African French" and not "Whiteman's French".

In order to determine the "lexical norm" for "popular French" for example such items as *gâter, durer, payer* and *chômer* which are considered by some researchers (cf. C. Hagege, 1968 and J. Roggero, 1970) to belong to "African popular French" in some of their uses need to be tested for "availability" with respect to "their popular meanings" among others in the speech of all users of this type of French in francophone Africa. Social contexts like school, home, job and neighbourhood and the linguistic competence of speakers will have to be taken into consideration. Only the meanings common to the majority of speakers whose speech acts will have been examined should be considered as *normal* in African "popular French". Where the majority of speakers with common meanings are identifiable with a particular geographical area, region or locality, their common usages may be described more appropriately as constituting a *regional* or *local norm* than as a *continental* or *common* African *norm*.

5.4 Linguistic typology and linguistic universals: their relevance to the identification of African language influence on French

Theoreticians of linguistic interference generally affirm that the "bilingual" or the learner of a new language tends to transpose sounds and even whole lexical items and their meanings from his native language as a means of reducing his linguistic burden: "Inasmuch as a language is a system of oppositions, writes U. Weinreich (1966:8), a partial identification of the system is to the bilingual a reduction of his linguistic burden. And it is these natural identifications which are at the root of many forms of interference".

The prenomenon of linguistic interference, as was remarked earlier, is not confined to a particular group of people. It has been observed in the foreign language performance of Americans, American Indians, Asians, Spaniards, Germans, Italians, Portuguese, French and Blacks (see chapter 3 and E.N. Kwofie, 1978:26-27, for example). The precondition for interference is the individual with an unspecified mastery of two or more languages; interference may take one or another of the following forms listed by E. Haugen (1956:12):

> In practice, interference takes many forms, described in the literature as "foreign accent", "language mixture", "unidiomatic expressions", "loanwords", "translation loans", "semantic borrowing", and the like. It may be wholly individual or it may have gained such currency that it becomes the property of a whole speech area".

Consequently, interference may be regarded as a linguistic universal, a universal linguistic phenomenon that may be expressed in the following terms:

> Any time two or more languages are brought into contact there will be influences in the one or the other direction; such influences may be of such frequency and extent that they may be temporary or permanent and may lead in the latter case to a permanent modification of the original system.

As a "synchronic" phenomenon applicable to all human languages interference seems to arise from two main factors:

1) despite the enormous variability of language and the diversity of languages, human languages seem, on the whole, to share imortant features; such features are shared as a result of (a) common historical origins (diffusion, etc.) or (b) common tendencies of all human languages;

2) despite the variety of human types, certain features which ensure communication seem to be common to all men.

To say that human languages have common tendencies is a generalisation which implies that any two or more given languages will be found upon examination to possess a feature that linguists, through the study of individual languages, have identified and consider as *natural* or *normal* in any human language and *should characterise* other languages they have not come across. It assumes further that linguists know the nature of language and have identified and set up features and categories which define this nature.

The recognition by linguists of the levels of phonology, grammar and vocabulary for example, implies that any natural or human language may be analysed at those levels in terms of appropriate units and features. Thus in the "Preface" to his *Generative Phonology*, Sanford A. Schane (1973:xv) for example makes the observation that follows:

> This book does not describe in great detail the phonological structure of any particular language. Rather, we shall be looking at the properties of phonological systems in general - what is common to the phonologies of all languages. Of course, general phonological theory cannot be divorced from what happens in specific languages, since the theory evolves from experience with real linguistic data.

As has been observed however by several linguists, languages are structurally so diverse, that is, that linguistic differences are so extensive and deep that even a very limited comparison of languages will provide enough evidence for rejecting many of the universal hypotheses. It is this realisation that has, I believe, led to the distinction between *formal* and *substantive* universals (cf. N. Chomsky, 1970:27-30; H. Lieb, 1975; J.H. Greenberg, 1971:143, 155, 295-313 for discussions). Language universals seem to have been defined from two standpoints:

1) by taking into account the properties of languages;

2) by considering the properties of man (i.e. human beings).

The definition of language universals under 2) is made on the basis of the properties human beings possess which make their use of language possible. Such properties include the perception, production, organisation and interpretation of sounds and sequences of sounds. Every normal human being is considered to possess these aptitudes, innate dispositions or abilities that make language acquisition and use possible.

Consequently, linguists working on language universals attribute a tacit knowledge of linguistic universals to the child, and hypothesize as Chomsky (1970:27) does that the child:

> approaches the data with the presumption that they are drawn from a language of a certain antecedently well-defined type, his problem being to determine which of the (humanly) possible languages is that of the community in which he is placed.

The idea of linguistic universals under 1) is based on another idea: that of class or type; implied in the notion of class or type is the obvious idea that members of the class or type share features. The idea of class or type is basic to typological classification or linguistic typology. The criteria or

features that the linguist proposes for typological classification have, by their extension and generalisation, the character of universals. Linguistic typology and linguistic universals are thus intimately related in the sense that it is the former that makes the latter a feasible project of linguistics.

Now, comparable or identical interference phenomena observed in the French (or other) language performances of subjects belonging to different speech communities that are not genetically or historically related or have never been in contact cannot be explained except by recourse to the similarity of the structures of the autochthonous and other languages used by subjects. Similarity of linguistic structures can only be demonstrated through linguistic typology based on the comparison of the phonological, grammatical and lexical systems of languages. However, since interference is also psychologically based, interference phenomena cannot be explained merely in terms of linguistic structure. The bilingual's desire to "reduce his linguistic burden" (cf. U. Weinreich cited above) has its source in the bilingual's psyche. For notice that before interlingual identifications can be made the bilingual must first identify the linguistic task to be performed, and perceive or fail to perceive similarities and differences between his languages. Considering the similarity and difference between languages in contact as determiners of ease and difficulty of learning, R. Lado (1957, 1964:59) writes:

> Since even languages as closely related as German and English differ significantly in form, meaning and distribution of their grammatical structures, and since the learner tends to transfer the habits of his native language structure to the foreign language, we have here the major source of difficulty or ease in learning the structure of a foreign language. Those structures that are similar will be easy to learn because they will be transferred and may function satisfactorily in the foreign language. Those structures that are different will be difficult because when transferred they will not function satisfactorily in the foreign language and will therefore have to be changed.

The procedure generally adopted by the bilingual is a "short-cut" for what the linguist normally does, his needs being more immediate or urgent and not being necessarily equipped with the linguist's tools.

Interference must be seen then to have both linguistic and psychophysiological bases; consequently, it can be satisfactorily explained only in terms of those bases or the features representing those bases.

5.5 Conclusion: Interference: A factor of linguistic change, a universal

It is an obvious linguistic fact that all natural languages evolve; linguistic change may therefore be considered as a universal.

In his chapter on "Written Records", L. Bloomfield (1933, 1962:281) observes:

> Every language is undergoing, at all time, a slow but unceasing process of linguistic change. We have direct evidence of this change in the case of communities which possess written records of their earlier speech. The English of the King James Bible or of Shakespeare (sic) is unlike the English of today. The fourteenth-century English of Chaucer is intelligible to us only if we use a glossary ..... The speed of linguistic change cannot be stated in absolute terms.

Many theories of language change have so far been proposed and reviewed by scholars (see chapter 3 for some references). There are disagreements about the substance of such theories; it seems clear however that *contact* between languages is *a* factor of language change; *constraints of utility, the principle of greater comfort* and *social factors* are others. The relationships between these various factors are not easy to specify. However if it is hypothesized that all factors of linguistic change are universals, linguistic interference which presupposes the contact of languages and of course of human beings must be a universal. Now, the diverse contact situations observable throughout the world: bilingual, multilingual, diglossic, etc. entail the contact not only of linguistic structures but also of human beings and consequently the interplay of the innate abilities that make communication possible. It must therefore be expected that those features that characterise language and man as a user of language would manifest themselves in different situations; it could further be expected that the diverse situations would produce constants.

Some of the results of research carried out on French-African language contact show on the one hand that there are striking resemblances in the French language performances of African subjects despite the diversity of linguistic competences and of contact situations. The typological classifications of African languages (cf. B. Heine, 1975; W. Welmers, 1973; P. Alexandre, 1972:39-59; J.H. Greenberg, 1966, 1971:189-190) show on the other hand that there are significant structural parallels among many African languages. Since there is no strict genetic or historical relationship between many of the languages involved in these particular situations of contact (see chapter 3), the recurrence of features due to the phenomenon of interference must be explained in terms of the comparability or identity of the structures or of the formal properties of the languages concerned.

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